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# ***JPRS Report***

## **Near East & South Asia**

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# Near East & South Asia

JPRS-NEA-94-029

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2 June 1994

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## PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

### Inter-Palestinian Relations Analyzed

94AF0189A Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 4 Apr 94  
pp 9, 15

[Article by Rub'i al-Madhun: "Limited Options in Inter-Palestinian Relations"]

[Text] Are the Palestinians heading toward a civil war in their mounting political disputes as they approach implementation of the autonomy formula in Gaza and Jericho first? Or towards a coexistence that is uneasy yet capable of securing basic elements of control to prevent the outbreak of any local wars, and to avert the spread of their destructive outcomes?

It would be naive not to expect the Palestinians' to quickly return to the local "cold" war pattern that has accompanied the peace process in the Middle East ever since the Madrid conference. It would also be a mistake not to show profound feelings of fear and unease that reflect the extent of anxiety over the future of domestic Palestinian relations as the authority exerts its powers in the autonomous areas. And yet it would be dangerous to depend on these two expressions of general positions on larger, transitional events, such as we see leading the Palestinians into a tunnel that would limit their options either to retreating from larger events in their political life—with the aim of obtaining "joint satisfaction" and enabling them to "put their house in order"—or to facing civil war to decide the course of the struggle.

It is important at the outset to avoid the trap of drawing instant deductions, relying on the phenomenon of developments. It is necessary to explore the background of the phenomenon, to go directly into a quick but quiet process, to dismantle it, in order to find the elements that may be within the realm of possibility, and to exclude exaggeration. Anxieties generate possibilities.

#### "Palestinian Militias"

The Palestinians' fears spring from three principal sources that have solidified into a fourth, after reports of the spread of more arms in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the fact that the Israeli occupation authorities have facilitated the acquisition of arms for a large number of citizens through purchase, smuggling, or condoning the theft of arms. They have encouraged the formation of local militias to push the Authority in the autonomous areas into a civil war, imposing an impediment to the first Palestinian autonomy experiment at its very beginnings. These sources are:

First: the mounting attitude of "political anger" on the part of Palestinian factions who oppose the policy of the PLO leadership and Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, and the PLO's abandonment of these factions along the way, which leads to their estrangement and extinction, rather than to their participation in the political arena, where they may have positive effects on the political process. This has limited the dissidents' options to calling for the death of 'Arafat and his comrades, or proclaiming public despair

and frustration with the public manifestations of the Palestinian condition. Both options are extreme movements in conflicting directions, and neither one has the power to influence official policy, as each includes open—and possibly final—acknowledgement of early bankruptcy.

Second: the isolation of a limited number of Palestinian leaders who are managing Palestinian affairs in every category, and the growing tendency toward secrecy and immersion in administrative detail. These elements give profound indications of the likelihood of mounting doubts in Palestinian circles over the future of the national movement, and the level of public participation in the making of policy and the nature of laws governing this participation. This comes at a time when other indications give more ominous confirmation of trends inside the leadership and in the major centers of action that could push in the direction of more hardened norms in relations between the coming Authority and its opponents, with the claim of avoiding public abandonment and likely oversight accompanying the process of transferring authority.

Third: these negative points of the Palestinian opposition support some early inferences regarding the nature of the future authority in the Gaza and Jericho areas. The first picture of the autonomy shows a vague image of the future of the opposition, some of whom expect a confrontation with the Palestinian police "even harsher than that with the Israeli forces." So how can these fears be tested in their probable interactions?

First, the past negative motives that represented the major causes of public tension must be eliminated, temporarily at least. The events that would most likely inflame or support expectations of war should be banished. The background of the incident should be studied, as the force that represents the main dominating instrument of action in the course of domestic relations, and the best able to define its final direction.

#### Curbing Ingredients of Tension

Let us begin with Hamas. This beginning provides a complete tour within the ranks of the opposition, as this fundamentalist organization plays the major dominating role in controlling the elements of general tension, not because it is the most ominous "partner" of the PLO, but because it is without peer in political opposition to 'Arafat. It holds many of the keys to domination—from afar—with numerous elements of Palestinian peace and war. It is the most widespread and the most influential, and the least subordinate, and this distinction made it less interested in the practical aspect of the development of relations in the existing 10-member opposition alliance in Damascus today, which it describes as a media arena more than a forum for achieving specific gains on the ground. Thus Hamas, which talks a great deal here, does not ignore what is happening there (however little), as the Palestinian Authority begins the first phase of formation. Is it enough to confirm the belief that Hamas is no longer busy escalating a cold war of words with 'Arafat and the PLO leadership, while the elements deciding the battle will not



be on the scene of this war seeking to gain greater influence, in order to be granted legitimate and official status?

A reading of the results of the recent agreements and charters signed by the powers of war and peace on the Palestinian scene shows a marked inclination to explain the motives of their political decisions, which form the general trend of PLO policy more than their interest in obstructing their enemies or threatening them directly, and pushing them into decisions they do not consider right. But Hamas politicians, who have been characterized over the past two years by humble political experience and division in political pronouncements based on reactions of the supports of difference, and reaffirming political participation, have begun to gain political field experience, especially after numerous setbacks. If one sets aside the difference of their armed activities—and this development is reflected in the attempts of some Hamas members to push the movement toward greater pragmatism and a reduction in the intensity of its fundamentalist violence—if one takes the conventional meaning of this violence, can this development be placed in the category of tactical politics, or a cautious step on the part of Hamas to prepare the way for an announcement of its participation in the future Palestinian Authority, or at least in its civil administrative institutions?

#### Hamas Camp

A little consideration of the power of Hamas is helpful to the process of exploring the rest of the elements of Palestinian war and peace. Despite the growth of Hamas's influence and its strength on the ground in the occupied areas, it has still not created a sufficient threat to the PLO's influence allowing it to remove it from the arena, but it has produced a certain "power balance" which has begun to strengthen in the Hamas camp with a rise in gun ownership and the development of technical field abilities in terms of violent armed action, especially in operations targeted against Israeli intelligence and its officers. Fatah, on the other hand, the biggest organization, some of whose armed persons turned in their war materiel to the occupation authorities in response to political developments, while some others held on to a small amount of equipment—it has begun to exchange its former elements of power for the possession of the official security power, represented by at least 6,000 policemen who will be at the disposal of the future Authority, of which Fatah will be the backbone. It will be the Authority's direct instrument for safeguarding the general regime and protecting the political agreements between the PLO and Israel, within the confines of the force's deployment area, and their major operation areas. If these two power elements represent the measure of the "balance of deterrence" of the two sides and prevent the firing of the first missile at the crossing point, then the question would be about the factors of controlling this balance, which does not make civil war a mandatory transition. And if that is possible, what are the transitions they will pass through?

#### Expanding the Borders of Coexistence

Now, we are able to identify the abilities of both Fatah and Hamas as the two primary, major, dominating powers in equalizing the "balance of power," which in turn sets out the divisions between internal peace and war, and which also impose the form of possible coexistence. How is this balance employed, not in its more perilous uses to destroy an enemy, but in the framework of joint cooperation?

The PLO will be facing, in the very near future, the dilemma of controlling numerous secondary and marginal balances that have the potential to cause the internal collapse of national relations. This requires Fatah, first and foremost, to review the worst conditions at the general and specific levels inside the PLO's institutions, as Fatah constitutes the greatest weight inside the PLO. For there is something that goes beyond the perils of this dilemma to more dangerous channels of action proposed to the PLO leadership, to allow the approach to a palpable degree more like the practices of statesmen. They must change existing institutions' management methods that emphasize skills that do not value work with the mentality of the "political marketplace." They must also create a delicate balance on more than one level between this authority's respect for the agreements it has signed and the PLO's announced commitments within the current political settlement context, which enables them to protect the PLO's agreement without being forced into a clash with the opposing forces, especially concerning autonomous control. A balance such as this may not be struck without an increased grasp of the opposition's problems, and working to relinquish its extremist ideas by pushing it towards practical tests that would convince it to reformulate its positions, and everything that would lead to direct confrontations with it. The slide towards confrontation would not serve the interests of the opposition, but harm them, also, and directly, the broad popular sectors and factions that appear hurt already by the outcome of the political agreements with Israel. They feel that these agreements have not so far served their short-term or long-term interests. In another sense, 'Arafat's command, which will undertake its duties in the autonomous areas by stabilizing and maintaining security, will face political opposition seeking the widest possible forums for expression and freedom of opinion, at a time when the Palestinian leadership finds itself compelled to ignore the sounds of explosions in areas outside its control. This aspect, which includes armed Palestinian actions, must be turned into an Israeli problem, to prevent any Palestinian side from playing the role of guardian of Israel's security interests in areas from which Israel refuses to withdraw, and in which it is still raising thousands of flags of occupation.

On the other hand, the opposition forces, principally Hamas, face in turn the same balance, but in a way that imposes on them the creation of a precise and accurate balance between general Palestinian national aspirations for peaceful coexistence among all political sides, and their militant demands, including armed action, which might continue all along the occupation border surrounding the autonomous area.



Despite the seeming equivalence of the dilemmas of the two sides (the PLO and the opposition) and the sharing of responsibility for the perils of any slide into civil war, the control factors are the PLO's, when we consider its official status and its way of dealing with the opposition as a measure upon which much light will be shed.

Thus we may move on to the test of another sort of balance, of the type that defines Hamas's and the other opposition forces' options after the end of the interactions that will come with the first intensive and public appearance of the Palestinian police in the autonomous areas.

At the outset, there is no need to overemphasize the negative effects of the appearance of the police force. Despite its inevitable show of force, destined for sabotage and field experience, the appearance of the Palestinian police, unprecedented since the Israeli occupation in 1967, will take place after the disappearance of the Israeli army, the security forces, the "border guard," and their Palestinian helpers. This will transform the show of force into the police's first positive task, to safeguard the citizens' security and the protection of production facilities and maintaining the process of building the first Palestinian Authority on our national soil. This gives this transformation a celebratory value that hides, for the present, any tendency toward repression.

Thus we approach the imagined picture of the likely reality in the autonomous areas, and with it we come to the possibilities generated by this first step:

The first hypothesis is that Hamas and other opposition forces intend to launch sporadic attacks on the Palestinian police forces, exploiting the unstable transitional state, with the aim of confusing the new Authority and hampering its exercise of power and the complete extension of its influence in the autonomous areas. However, this hypothesis is forcefully contradicted by Hamas's past assurances that it would not be the first to initiate a clash, and that it does not intend to fight the Palestinian police as long as the latter does not obstruct Hamas's armed cells, give chase to its fighters, or hamper its resistance to the occupation. It is also incompatible with the recent statements and positions issued by Hamas spokesmen in the wake of the Cairo agreement between the PLO and Israel, which merely set out Hamas's position on the agreement and its expectations with regard to it. It contained no provocative or even outspoken charges; nor did it contain, as was usual in past, any challenges to the autonomous Authority going any farther than betting on its failure.

The second hypothesis is that Hamas will accept in principle a sort of coexistence with the future Authority, being content to rely on the shortcomings of the Cairo agreement and the negative points of the Oslo accord in its bet on the failure of the peace process, and on the basis of the accord's new burdens on the Palestinian people. In this case, we would be facing two scenarios.

1. Expanding the "mutual coexistence" between Hamas and the opposition under the umbrella of the new Authority, and Hamas's willingness to participate indirectly in the agencies of the Authority through its members

and supporters inside the Palestinian institutions and the spread of this participation to other security-related institutions against the occupation forces all along the belt surrounding the autonomous area. This possibility is the most likely, especially in the time between the start of the handover of power and the elections expected in July. This time period appears likely, because the rest of the opposition sides, perhaps includes this distinction, going outside the opposition's traditional positions, and taking advantage of the time period available to prepare for elections. We do not, however, expect Hamas to announce intentions like these, or for them to crop up in its spokesmen's statements any time soon. Hamas's purpose is not to announce its intentions fully, and it is precisely this that has begun to stir up the fears of the other opposition forces, which have begun to whisper that the PLO is putting "one foot here—inside the ranks of the opposition alliance—and another foot there, with 'Arafat."

2. The development of a partial "upset" in Hamas's positions, especially with the likelihood of participating with the Authority in elections. This was clearly the view in Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's papers, published weekly in AL-WASAT a few months ago. If things move in this direction, the features of this upset would begin with Hamas's decision to make a broad and organized entry into the autonomous institutions. This would translate its public influence into a power taking part in seizing the centers of power in the Authority's administrative institutions.

Thus we may summarize the probabilities of the interaction of the elements of internal conflict in the coming phase as follows: the emergence of a sort of balance of unease between the future Palestinian Authority in the autonomous areas, and the Palestinian opposition, based on the two sides' balance of interests, which could hold the keys to power in the future of war and peace, a mounting tendency toward stability. This means continued apprehensions over the course of the changes, but to an extent that would still leave the door to salvation open.

#### **Palestine Investment Company Plans**

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p 10

[Interview with Raja'i al-Masri, by 'Adil Bishtawi, from Amman; date not given—first five paragraphs are AL-HAYAH introduction]

[Text] At the time of ongoing political negotiations for an end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, several other parties are continuing their efforts to create institutions capable of bringing about development and improving the quality of life of inhabitants of the occupied territories as well as of building the infrastructure and restoring essential services after 26 years of negligence and destruction that were at the core of Israeli occupation policies.

A number of Israeli institutions and Palestinian businessmen have announced the founding of holding companies to help rebuild the occupied motherland, even before agreement was reached in Washington last September on

the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

There have been recurring press reports of "huge" projects being planned to expend "billions of dollars" in the West Bank and the Strip. A great many of those plans, however, did not materialize and may never see the light of day.

Information available so far would indicate that the Palestine Development and Investment Corporation (PDIC), incorporated in Amman at the end of last month, has the financial, managerial, and technical clout to do the difficult job ahead. It would also seem that it has adopted a more tangible strategy to deal with current conditions and possible future developments.

AL-HAYAH had the following interview in Amman with Raja'i al-Masri, the company's official spokesman.

[Bishtawi] Now that the Palestine Development and Investment Corporation has been incorporated in Amman and its 16-member Board of Directors elected, what remains to be done before operations can begin in occupied Palestine?

[Al-Masri] The next step is to appoint a managing director for the company after his job description is stated. The company's administrative structure has already been defined and a number of individuals have already been named to certain positions. Legal counsel has already taken steps to establish the company's regional headquarters in Amman as discussions continue with regard to its main offices in Palestine. The final location of the latter is yet to be determined, but they will be initially located in the West Bank, in or close to Jerusalem. Additional offices will be opened in Gaza City.

[Bishtawi] What are the broad investment strategies of Palestine Development and Investment Corporation?

[Al-Masri] Conceptually, the company's activities will primarily be a function of its nature as a funding company in the sense that it will be a financing vehicle, even though it may play a limited role in the transfer of technology. I am not referring to pure or basic sciences; rather, to the transfer of the technology of various types of systems. The company will engage in constant contacts in an endeavor to foster world-wide financing relations with private and other institutions such as the European Community and the International Finance Agency. The latter is a World Bank agency concerned with private sector investments. Meanwhile, we continue to seek and identify others with which we can open dialogue and cooperate and from whose experiences we can benefit.

The company, after completing feasibility studies for the projects it targets for investment, plans to invest initially through companies operating in the West Bank and Gaza, including al-Ruwad Palestinian company, which is yet to be founded even though it has been registered in Ramallah and several founders culled from among West Bank businessmen. The parent company (Palestine Development and Investment) will own 49 percent of al-Ruwad's estimated capital of \$50 million. This is the maximum

investment ratio allowed under current laws in the occupied territories. It is currently planned that local Palestinian founders put up 25 percent of capital and offer the remaining 26 percent to public subscription in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The company's total investments in the interior could be in the vicinity of \$200 million.

[Bishtawi] There are expectations that the company may begin operations in occupied Palestine within six months. What type of project could the company undertake or invest in?

[Al-Masri] There are a number of essential projects that are important both strategically and as investments. Preliminary studies have already been made on one such project that focuses primarily on the construction industry. It will be implemented in several stages.

Certain projects involve the construction of fully integrated housing complexes outside the cities in order to help alleviate stifling population densities. Each complex would comprise 1,000 housing units. There is a political dimension to this that must be dealt with first, because it has to do with the land privatization issue. It is common knowledge that land ownership is in dispute, and the subject of Palestinian land is therefore extremely sensitive and complex.

Other plans call for the construction of three- and four-star hotels in a number of Palestinian cities. A number of industrial and productive projects aim at creating employment opportunities.

[Bishtawi] How will the company raise the capital to finance all the aforementioned projects, which may cost \$1 billion?

[Al-Masri] The company seeks to raise \$200 million through a private subscription. About half of that amount has already been pledged. I don't foresee a problem in raising the entire amount since the deadline for the private subscription has been extended for three more months ending this coming 30 June. Since the subscription is private, the minimum investment amount has been set at \$100,000 and the maximum at \$1 million—the latter being 1 percent of capitalization. That would guarantee that no one party could gain control of the company and would ensure the widest possible investor base by giving everyone an opportunity to subscribe.

[Bishtawi] Why didn't the company hold a public subscription as the Lebanese company Solidaire did? There are a large number of Palestinian investors who are able and willing to finance this vital project.

[Al-Masri] I believe it is because the maximum investment amount was set at \$1 million. There is a considerable number of Arab and Palestinian investors abroad who are able to subscribe such an amount. Another reason is that the intention was to raise needed capital as rapidly as possible in order to coincide with the opening of the West Bank and Gaza to investments. Furthermore, the legal

structure of the parent company and its possible subsidiaries provides for the future broadening of the subscription base in order to enable the largest possible number of Arabs and Palestinians to contribute to the development of Palestinian lands.

[Bishtawi] Does the strategy of establishing a holding company to engage in private sector investments mean that the political leadership has given its support or has acquiesced to the fact that the Palestinian economy will be open, private, and free-market-driven rather than be government directed or controlled?

[Al-Masri] There is considerable dependence on the private sector in the effort towards development and social and economic revival in Palestinian lands. The private sector accounts for 85 percent of Palestinian economic activity, according to World Bank figures based on the finest field studies. The public sector played no major role during the 26 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, during which the private sector had to contend with extremely difficult conditions and cope with impossible regulations, oppressive martial law, and other factors that helped instill in it the spirit of individual enterprise, initiative, and awareness. The free-market concept is therefore taking hold as a tradition. We must build upon something positive and that economic convention is positive without a doubt.

[Bishtawi] Am I to understand then that there has been stated or unstated prior agreement with the Palestinian political leadership to abstain from government controls and refrain from the partial or full nationalization of future projects and institutions in Palestinian lands?

[Al-Masri] It is not my place to verbalize the viewpoint of the political leadership. However, the political leadership has been consulted and it gave its blessing. The company's orientation has been stated in its articles of incorporation and it varies considerably from those of many other Arab companies founded in the past 20 or 30 years. The articles emphasize that the company will engage in medium- to long-term investments and that its stock will not be traded during the first few months or even the first few years. The articles also call for adding capital gradually over four years. The objective is not quick profit as proved by the fact that it was not made easy to trade the company stock early on. It can be said, generally speaking, that some company activities will fall under the development plans instituted by the political leadership, including those plans contained in studies prepared by concerned organizations such as the World Bank and others. It should not be forgotten that sound investments mean projects that are feasible and profitable.

[Bishtawi] The plan to establish the Palestine Development and Investment Corporation is based on two basic assumptions. The first is that peace is inevitable and that it will at least allow for industrial and commercial activity. The second is that relations between Jordan and Palestine are predetermined and known?

[Al-Masri] It goes without saying that the huge investment and economic capabilities of all Arabs and Palestinians

outside Palestine should be enlisted to seize all opportunities for capital to contribute, with a reasonable degree of efficacy and freedom, in correcting the grave imbalances, deviations, and distortions that afflict the economic structure of Palestinian lands as a result of the Israeli occupation. Despite the complexity and fluctuations of political conditions, and despite the diversity and disparity of the many visions for the future, this recruitment of capital would lay the ground work for social and economic development in order to create jobs, raise incomes, improve expertise, and develop the skills of the overwhelming majority of our working people in the Palestinian lands. That goes hand in hand with realizing for investors worthwhile returns on capital. Success in that endeavor is supposed to anchor the people to the Palestinian lands. Furthermore, it is immensely important for the Palestinian economy to refrain from close ties with and almost total subservience to the Israeli economy. Opportunities should be created to facilitate the restoration of wider economic exchange and the launching of joint ventures between Palestinian lands and the sister Arab states.

[Bishtawi] Were you asked by the Jordanian Government to defer the incorporation of the company, for instance until the relationship between Jordan and the Palestinian entity takes its final shape or until a propensity emerges for certain projects and not others?

[Al-Masri] The Jordanian Government has not intervened in the slightest at any stage of founding the company. At the inaugural celebration held at the Amman Chamber of Industry and addressed by PLO representative Ahmad Quray' (Abu-'Ala'), Jordan announced in the person of Dr. Jawad al-'Anani, minister of information, that it would extend all possible assistance to guarantee company success and enable it to realize its objectives. It was clear by his statement that Jordan would not interfere with the Palestine Development and Investment Corporation. We must at this point emphasize the unity of the two peoples and the similitude of their interests.

[Bishtawi] Even though the situation has eased somewhat, there remains a great deal of ambiguity, for instance about the nature of the administrative institutions with which the Palestine Development and Investment Corporation and similar establishments would deal in the West Bank and Gaza?

[Al-Masri] This is true but the objective at the moment is to attempt to mobilize human and financial resources in order to have manpower and financing ready and waiting when the situation becomes clearer. I can say that the company endeavors to skirt the many deficiencies of the present by wielding the weight it has achieved thanks to the caliber of its investors. It is a given that the vagueness and uncertainty that characterize this period in time would tend to discourage individual private capital from investing in Palestinian lands. That prompted the creation of the company in order to undertake that important wide-scale assemblage of investors from among leading institutions and distinguished senior businessmen, thereby assigning private sector contributions a leading and innovating role. The Palestine Development and Investment



Corporation, as it now stands, has the necessary clout that—coupled with efficient management and the adoption of modern advancement systems—would enable it to be doubly effective in achieving targeted objectives within a reasonable time frame.

[Bishtawi] Palestine Development and Investments Company is not the first firm founded for the development of Palestine and for undertaking projects in the West Bank and Gaza. Are you coordinating with other companies in order to avoid duplication and competition for the limited number of projects?

[Al-Masri] There is no coordination per se. The company will be primarily active in strategic projects. We will not be involved in small projects except to offer support. There are industrial projects undertaken either by individuals or by a small group of businessmen, and these need financial, technical, managerial, and marketing support. It is in those areas that support can be offered, but not for the purpose of control or full or even substantial ownership. The company will therefore specialize primarily in the implementation of strategic and medium-range projects that would be untenable for individual investors.

[Bishtawi] In which currencies will the company deal?

[Al-Masri] The company's capital is in U.S. dollars but investments will be denominated on the basis of capital invested into local companies in the domestic currency. But there will be companies like al-Ruwad which chose to put its capital (50 million) in U.S. dollars.

[Bishtawi] Have you considered, for instance, hedging contracts that would protect the company against sharp fluctuations to which investments in local currencies may be exposed?

[Al-Masri] This is something for the future into which we have not yet looked. It will be considered on a case-by-case basis as it comes up. The reason is that in most of the investments being considered, capital will not be recouped for a period of perhaps three to five years before distributions of profits are made. They will therefore be self-stabilizing and hedging would be short termed.

[Bishtawi] The premise underlying all this, as we understand it, is that Israel will withdraw from the West Bank and the Strip or you would not have considered the establishment of this company; and that there will be stability, otherwise there will be no development since it is a function of stability. Are these and other developments a consideration in the company's operating strategies, or would you be able to halt operations at any stage that suffers a specific setback and go back to the planning board?

[Al-Masri] The laws under which the company was incorporated as well as its articles of incorporation give it enough flexibility. I reiterate that political developments are beyond our control, but indications of a peaceful solution do exist.

[Bishtawi] As an international expert in economic and financial affairs, would you advise the Arab or Palestinian

venture capitalist in the diaspora to invest in a company like Palestine Development and Investment Corporation?

[Al-Masri] Palestinians primarily, and Arabs to a lesser degree, are invited at this time to assume the long-delayed role that is incumbent upon them to play. We all agree that we are currently passing through a period of uncertainty. The path is not clearly marked, and the difficulties are numerous. But it is this type of situation that generates deeper commitment and a more urgent call for involvement. Our people in the lands of Palestine have the ability and determination to dust off backwardness and bring about an ever-increasing development that is sustainable through our own potential and abilities once occupation ends and artificial legislative and legal restrictions are lifted, and heavy-handed political domination is removed. Perhaps our greatest asset, without giving in to narrow chauvinism, is the human resources in Palestinian lands, be they resolute businessmen or stone-throwing children, as borne out by recent World Bank studies. All this will inevitably generate numerous worthwhile economic and investment opportunities, and it stands to reason that Palestinian and Arab investors should share in their rewards.

[Bishtawi] Some international experts expect peace in the Middle East to create conditions that would transform the region into one of the most prosperous areas of the world. How do you see this?

[Al-Masri] That is our target and hope. I am a resident of the West who has traveled extensively in Asia over the past three years. I have dealt with the so-called economic tigers (such as Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea), and I have always felt deeply anguished. We should never give in to negativism, because the world is moving at a tremendous pace, and the gap between us and the developed world is widening rapidly. We have no alternative but to build, but we must have available to us certain markets and a certain degree of integration in order to play an effective role in developing the economy, raise the standard of living, and catch up somewhat with world development. The company, by virtue of its stated purpose, is attempting to play such a role, but this would depend on the political will. The presence of political will, along with awareness and education, is of the essence. All this is a function of people's convictions, customs, and habits, as well as of existing laws and of the need for economic liberalization. There is no other way.

[Bishtawi] How do you describe Raja'i al-Masri?

[Al-Masri] Raja'i al-Masri is a Palestinian who was born in 1948 in Nablus on the West Bank. He graduated from Wisconsin University in the United States with a degree in electrical engineering. I hold an MBA from a university in France and am a CFA international fellow [as published]. I held positions with the Banque de Paris, an investment bank in Paris, as well as with the Royal Bank of Canada and with Procter and Gamble. I presently live in Montreal, Canada, with my Lebanese wife and three sons. I am fluent in French and English and I know some German.

### The Board of Directors

The Palestine Development and Investment Corporation has on its board of directors a number of well-known institutions such as the Arab Bank, Cairo-Amman Bank, the Housing Bank, Dar-al-Handassah Company represented in the person of Dr. Kamal al-Sha'ir, al-Masirah Investment Company, and al-Sa'id Company. Other directors include Husayn al-Sharqawi, Khaldun Abu-Hassan, Riyadh Sadiq, Ramzi Dalul, Zahi Khuri, 'Azmi Abd-al-Hadi, Munib al-Masri, Nabil al-Sarraf, Nabil al-Shawwa, and Nidhal Sukhiyan.

Dr. al-Sha'ir has been elected chairman of the Board, Munib al-Masri as vice-chairman, and Nabil al-Sarraf as secretary.

Dr. al-Sha'ir is a well-known Jordanian businessman and member of the Jordanian House of Representatives. He owns Dar-al-Handassah, one of the largest contractors in the Arab nation.

## EGYPT

### Competing Interpretations of Islam Analyzed

94LD0054A Doha AL-SHARQ in Arabic 27 Apr 94 p 12

[Article by Yusuf al-Sharif: "Islam and the National Dialogue"]

[Text] At the present time, Islam, Islamic societies, and organizations for the propagation of Islam in general are facing various sorts of crude attacks and clear controversy over their motives, tendencies, allegiances, methods, and goals. The secularists in Egypt, for example, who reject the idea of a religious state, generalize: They do not differentiate between the Islamic groups that strive in God's path, with wisdom, spiritual counsel, conviction, and good example, and other groups that attack society for blasphemy and of pre-Islamic apostasy. [They fail to distinguish the danger of those] who call for individual interpretation of religion and the right to monopolize the propagation of Islam—those who rush to establish Islamic law by violent means and even terrorism!

Some secularists think there is an unwritten agreement between these groups—those who call for Islamic law by democratic and legitimate means and others who employ violence and terror. [They think] that each of the two groups is backing the other, and that whichever succeeds in attaining power first will necessarily and immediately proclaim the unification of the Islamic groups. All differences and conflicts between them would then disappear. The secularists who hold this opinion offer as proof their claim that various violent Islamic groups grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded by the late Shaykh Hasan al-Banna in the 1940s. They even accuse the Muslim Brotherhood of having hatched and nurtured persons who are easy for the violent Islamic groups to recruit.

There is a regrettable meeting of minds between the secularists and the political-Islam groups who pursue democracy or violence in their call for social change. They both scorn the role of al-Azhar and its esteemed scholars,

who have understood the sciences of religion through study and the attainment of qualifications, who pursue the propagation of the faith, religious counseling, and reasoning. The secularists for their part reject al-Azhar and its scholars whenever they try to correct mistaken ideas, in their preaching, writing, and intellectual achievements, as recently happened in the case of the television series ["The Family"] that tried to portray the phenomenon of terrorism without any familiarity with Islamic thinking or with the principles of worship and the proportionalities of reward and punishment for one's deeds. This sparked a dispute and all kinds of excesses by the secularists authors in response to the statement issued by His Excellency the Shaykh of al-Azhar in "The Family" series. One author, Wahid Hamid, even denied that Islam provides any clear pronouncement or allusion about what awaits a deceased person, who had been a heretic in this life, in terms of judgement and punishment in the grave. And there was the statement issued by the Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs, which defended the right of religious scholars and their role in combatting the excesses and errors in views of Islam, and in monitoring the literary and artistic works that exploit the climate of democratic freedoms, and distort Islam, the latest of the divinely revealed religions, which is valid and applicable at any time and in any place.

Meanwhile, the general message of the political-Islam groups is that they reject al-Azhar and the clerics of the Islamic Council, the Dar al-Ifta' [office of the mufti], and the society of preachers and those of the Ministry of Awqaf, claiming that they represent or express government Islam, and justify or are silent regarding government abuses. Islam, they say, does not recognize a clerical class; it is thus the right of every Muslim to deduce his own interpretation of the faith in his own best interests and the interests of other Muslims, even should that lead them to prey on society! It is amazing that a writer such as Tharwat Abazah, the vice-president of the Consultative Council, in an article printed in AL-AHRAM newspaper last week, entitled "Art is Integrity," accused factions of the national left—Nasirites and communists—of being, in his words, "infidels." What can the violent and extremist groups, who accuse society of blasphemy and apostasy, do with them, after seeing a secularist declare them to be infidels, except assassinate them, in accordance with the sentence that they claim is their right? When a great Islamic thinker such as Fahmi Huwaydi resisted this dangerous distortion of Islam, and called for Muslims to unite their visions and efforts to confront the dangers facing the Islamic nation, we received, at AL-SHARQ's Cairo office, dozens of telephone calls from people demanding that we supply them with the last two articles AL-SHARQ printed after their publication in other newspapers had been prevented!

Why all this distortion, clamor, and conflict over Islam now among Muslims in Egypt, secularists, fundamentalists, traditionalists, and moderates? Why did this not happen during the monarchical era, or at the peak of the July Revolution and the leadership of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir? Perhaps because, in the days of the monarchy, the various classes and factions of the people had joined the political parties that expressed their aspirations and



interests, and because the central national issue was embodied in the concept and the practices of all the popular forces on the achievement of independence and liberation from colonialism. Even the Muslim Brotherhood, which represented the Islamic political opposition to the existing regime, did not resort to accusing society of blasphemy and ignorance. They occupied themselves with Islamic education, and its mass expansion throughout Egypt, in the hopes of establishing an Islamic state through democratic means.

Thus the Muslim Brotherhood fought side by side with the Egyptian army in the Palestine war, and cooperated with the secret Free Officers organization in launching a war of nerves against the British occupation all along the Suez Canal. This was despite the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood undertook, after the martyrdom of Shaykh Hasan al-Banna, and the leadership of Counselor Hasan al-Hudaybi, to announce its hostility toward the July Revolution, to the point of trying to assassinate Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and overthrow the regime by force in 1954 and 1965. The revolution's national achievements and development projects surpassed the other parties in terms of establishing foundations of social justice; it thus pulled the rug out from under their feet, and crushed their former members' mass role, influence, and skirting of the revolution.

In Islamic terms, Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir was from the very beginning keen on the Islamic sphere, its thinking and strategic inclinations, side by side with the Arab, African, and nonaligned spheres. He extended his hand to support and aid the liberation of Islamic peoples from colonialism and backwardness. In its time, the Islamic renewal saw the rise of the Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs, which revived the Islamic heritage and printed thousands of Islamic publications and books. It had a plan to develop al-Azhar to graduate thousands of qualified doctors, engineers, and religious scholars to undertake the propagation of Islam throughout the world, in the languages of all its peoples. It established Holy Koran Radio.

We therefore believe that the early beginnings of Islamic extremism in Egypt were attributable to Anwar al-Sadat, may he rest in peace. He was the first to use them, in a Machiavellian fashion, to fight his Nasirite and communist enemies. It is he who supported them with money and violent means, as his close aides have attested. Then they turned against him and became his deadly enemies when he visited Jerusalem and signed a separate peace with Israel at Camp David, and he was assassinated by Islamists, setting off a wave of terror.

The picture is different today; the details are less distinct, in light of the government's failure to meet society's minimum aspirations. It is true that there are great achievements, and they keep coming, but they cannot deal with the problems, which also keep coming, and grow ever more serious. In the absence of a national plan, and frustrations on the Arab scene, the climate is ripe for the fragmentation of intellectual and ideological unity into scattered, conflicting, and struggling pieces. Meanwhile,

political parties are merely skeletons, or just newspapers or words, incapable of influencing the government or the masses.

Thus we, and the people of Egypt, rely on the glimmer of hope emitted by the anticipated national dialogue, which may limit, or solve, the problems of intellectual poverty in general, and the resulting distortion of Islam in particular. Perhaps the first conditions for success and credibility of the national dialogue lie in the trust and participation of every person who has a vision for Egypt's change for the better, individually or collectively, without disqualifying any, according to the standard of democracy and political and popular balance.

## Growth in Relations With China Announced

### Goals for Future Cooperation

94LD0043A Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 24 Apr 94  
pp 1, 3

[Article by Jalal Duwaydar: "Benefiting From the Experience of Beijing and in the Arab Interest"]

[Excerpts] Although President Mubarak's short visit to China, which ended yesterday morning, lasted only three days, there is a general consensus that it has achieved the desired results, and this is something that reflects the profound nature of the relations between the two countries and their leaders.

The most important thing that distinguishes Egyptian-Chinese relations, the roots of which go back dozens of years, is the fact that they are based on mutual respect, trust, friendship, and common interests.

In order that matters be clearly and openly put on the table, we must remark that President Mubarak, during this trip, has expended all possible efforts to enable Egypt to benefit from the achievements of the Chinese economic experiment—with all of its positive and negative aspects.

There also took place, during the visit, the signing of two agreements for investment and judicial cooperation between China and Egypt.

In addition to these two agreements, and by means of the discussions and meetings held by President Mubarak with the Chinese leaders, a number of policies have been established for joint cooperation between the two nations in new areas.

More precisely, the efforts undertaken by President Mubarak during this exhausting trip—which is only one of the dozens of trips he is undertaking for the sake of achieving advancement for Egypt's people and solving Egypt's problems—are not sufficient, because it is also necessary that the nation's executive agencies assume responsibility and move effectively in order to carry out, with the necessary speed, what was agreed upon.

In order to break out of this dead-end situation, agreement was reached to form working groups to follow up on the issues of joint cooperation.



The most important elements of cooperation agreed upon in President Mubarak's bilateral discussions with the Chinese leaders, which were also expanded to include the participation of 'Amr Musa, the minister of foreign affairs, and Safwat al-Sharif, the minister of information, were the following:

1. Continuation of political coordination concerning Arab, African, and world issues. The Chinese expressed their esteem and support for Egypt's efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.
2. The importance of working toward increasing the volume of trade between Egypt and China, and increasing the rates of Egypt's exports to a degree that reflects the strength of the relations between the two nations.
3. It was agreed that China will set up free-trade zones in Egypt for Chinese industries as a form of investment because of Egypt's location and proximity to the markets of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and it was also agreed that protocols dealing with industrial and technical cooperation will be signed.
4. Beijing's readiness to cooperate technologically with Egypt and to provide all types of possibilities that will help Egypt to achieve progress and to benefit from China's pioneering experiment in this field. Now it is up to Egypt's government organizations to move to seize this available opportunity.
5. An exchange of views concerning the problems of development and the open-door economic policy. These are difficulties that exist in both Egypt and China, and that they can find solutions for if they engage in joint efforts.
6. Judging by the meetings which took place, it is evident that most of the investments made in the new Chinese [free-trade] zones have been financed by members of the overseas Chinese communities (55 million persons). Also, a large percentage was contributed by the Chinese in Thailand and Hong Kong, in addition to the capital that comes from Japan and Singapore.

From the giant nation of China—which is moving firmly and steadfastly to take its place among the great powers, which will result in the achievement of the balance which is being sought in the new world order—President Mubarak has arrived in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the fellow-Arab nation of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], which has always opened up its heart and its arms to Egypt as its Arab big brother. [passage omitted] The trips abroad that President Mubarak occasionally takes always have the aim of guaranteeing continuity and pursuing strong relations of friendship with other nations. This helps these other nations to understand Egypt's problems and needs, and creates willingness [among them] to support Egypt in many of the positions it takes that are connected with the interests of the Egyptian people.

#### Status of Diplomatic Relations

94LD0043B Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 11 Apr 94  
p 3

[Article by Sa'id Sunbul]

[Text] The ambassador of China, Yang Fuchang, leaves Cairo at the end of this week to go to Beijing in order to

participate in the reception of President Husni Mubarak during his visit to China before the latter part of this month.

The Chinese ambassador in Cairo speaks fluent Arabic, and even speaks it with an Egyptian accent! He graduated from the Department of Arabic in Cairo University's College of Liberal Arts in the class of 1962.

The ambassador told me that his country was being far-sighted when it encouraged the Chinese to study Arabic, realizing the importance of Egypt and the Arab world. This action took place right after our deceased President Nasir had met with the Chinese leader Chou En-lai at the Bandung Conference in 1954. In that year, the two leaders, during this meeting, agreed to establish cultural relations between the two countries, in spite of the fact that they did not have political relations.

Shaykh Ahmad Hasan al-Baquri, now deceased, traveled to Beijing in 1955 at the head of an Egyptian cultural delegation. This was the first official delegation to visit China after its revolution against, and overthrow of, the regime of Chiang Kai-shek. During his stay in Beijing, Shaykh al-Baquri signed a cultural agreement with the Chinese Government, according to which the two nations agreed to an exchange of cultural relations.

It was under the terms of this agreement that the Chinese Government, in 1956, sent five young Chinese to Cairo to study Arabic. Yang Fuchang, China's current ambassador [to Egypt], was one of these five young men. After this group, other groups of Chinese also came to Cairo to study Arabic, and this process continued.

In the Chinese Embassy in Cairo there are about eight Chinese diplomats who read and speak Arabic. This ability of theirs enables them to really see what the situation in Egypt is and enables them to deal directly with the Egyptians instead of using interpreters.

In spite of how important China is to us, our embassy in Beijing stills deals with Chinese officials and others by means of Chinese interpreters! I do not know why the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Egypt does not draw upon the services of some Egyptians who read and speak Chinese. In my opinion, this is something that would help Egyptian diplomats to better perform their job.

When I visited China in September of last year, I found out that the government and large companies in both Japan and Korea, during the last few years, had begun to send large numbers of young people to China to study and learn Chinese in order to make it easier for them to deal with China.

China is the future. But the problem of dealing with China is that we do not know the language. I imagine that, during his visit to China, President Mubarak will give this matter in particular some of his attention, with the result being that there will be an increase in the number of groups of Egyptians being sent to China to study Chinese.

Whoever speaks the language of a country can easily open the closed doors of that country!

### **Mubarak on Interests in China, Asia**

94LD0043C Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 20 Apr 94  
p 3

[Report on speech by President Husni Mubarak before Chinese media delegation; place and date not given]

[Excerpts] President Husni Mubarak described the relations between Egypt and China as being historic relations, since Egypt was the first Arab and African nation to recognize the People's Republic of China.

In a speech to a Chinese media delegation representing Chinese media organizations, President Mubarak said that recent international developments, both in the Middle East and in East Asia, have brought attention to the vital importance of joint consultations between Egypt and China for the purpose of objectively evaluating these developments and seeking just and reasonable solutions from all parties, which would support peace and security throughout the world.

### **More Profound Mutual Understanding With Asia**

President Mubarak said: "Egypt is an African nation, but it is also an Asia nation by virtue of the fact that it is located on the crossroads of three major continents. For this reason, Egypt's cultural and religious ties with a large number of the Islamic nations and peoples in Asia impel Egyptian policy to become increasingly interested in achieving more profound ties of mutual understanding with the Asian continent."

The President added: "The economic and political importance of the nations of Asia and the Pacific area, and the degree to which they have come to participate in the world's production and international trade, leads us to predict that the next century will be the century of the Asian continent."

The President went on to say: "In light of the traditional ties of friendship between Egypt and most of the nations and peoples of Asia, Egyptian policy is one of pursuing active diplomacy with most of the nations of that continent as well as participating with other nations in the search for solutions to problems which may appear from time to time." [passage omitted]

### **Deep-Rooted Relations**

In response to a question concerning the goal and significance of his anticipated visit to China, President Mubarak said: "Relations between Egypt and China are both historical and political. With regard to the historical dimension, Egypt was the first Arab and African nation to recognize the People's Republic of China."

"With regard to the political dimension, the anchor of these relations has been a deep-rooted friendship based on cooperation, mutual consultation, and coordination regarding the various Arab and world issues, due to the major role played by China in the world arena and due to

the importance of Egypt among the Arab and African nations in the Middle East and Africa."

The president said: "Egyptian-Chinese relations are nearly 40 years old. This has been a fertile period, full of developments in the world arena in most of the continents of the world and in the relations of the superpowers, after the profound and radical changes that have taken place in the balance of power that had been stable since World War II."

### **Appraisal of the Situation**

The president continued: "There is no doubt that the leaders of both China and Egypt have their own particular views and assessments of the nature of these changes and their likely effects on the issues of international and regional security and stability in the world as well as issues such as disarmament, etc."

He added: "Recent international developments in the Middle East and East Asia have brought attention to the special importance of having mutual consultations between the two nations for the purpose of coming up with an objective appraisal [of the situation] and seeking just and reasonable solutions from all parties which would support peace and security throughout the world."

President Mubarak then replied to a question from the Chinese media delegation concerning his appraisal of the current situation with regard to Egyptian-Chinese relations and ways that would lead to strengthening ties of cooperation between Egypt and China during the period of important changes the world community is witnessing at the current time:

### **Mutual Trust**

"Egyptian-Chinese relations are characterized by a special nature that makes them different from bilateral relations that we have with many other friendly nations. In addition to the ancient historical tradition that each of the two nations has, as well as the great degree of mutual trust that has existed between the peoples and leaders of the two nations over a period of dozens of years, cooperation between the two countries has been achieved in many areas of joint action in economic, cultural, scientific, and other fields."

"Also, there have been many levels of cooperation between the official agencies and parliamentary, party, and labor union organizations. This has created a common basis for mutual understanding between the two peoples, which has greatly strengthened the firm ties of friendship on the highest levels that exist between Cairo and Beijing."

President Mubarak continued: "Naturally, if our political relations have reached this degree of trust and this height, we aspire to have our economic cooperation and trade reach these world levels also, taking into consideration the great leap achieved by the Chinese economy in growth and prosperity and the important steps achieved in the Egyptian economy in recent years."

### Trade

"These two factors should lead to an opening of broad horizons and possibilities for the expansion of trade between Egypt and China, to an increase in their share of the world's trade, benefiting the peoples of the two friendly nations, and to benefits being gained from the great technological and industrial progress which has been achieved by China in recent years."

### Experience in Economic Reform

Concerning a question about the aspects of similarity between Egypt's and China's experience with economic reform and what the results have been of these experiments in terms of great achievements and expertise gained, which could be utilized for the mutual benefit of the two nations, President Mubarak said: "Egypt, as a developing country, which in the early sixties adopted the idea of central planning for its economy, has faced big problems and taken on many burdens as a result of the numerous armed conflicts that have taken place in the Middle East and has had difficulties in connection with developing the necessary infrastructure for economic development and increasing its rates of growth. In addition to this, in Egypt we have experienced a continual increase in our population, which has been higher than the rates of our economic growth and which has been disproportionate to the nation's natural and economic resources."

"In view of these problems, in the early eighties Egypt initiated a comprehensive review of its economic plans and programs, bearing in mind the requirements of modern economic thought and the application of reform programs in a manner that would be in accordance with our particular circumstances and social conditions and the needs of our citizens in Egypt."

The president went on to say: "With the application of two five-year plans since 1982 and the beginning of the third plan in 1992, the reaping of the fruits of the monetary, fiscal, and structural reform in the Egyptian economy, and the following of policies of economic liberalization and privatization in accordance with the circumstances of Egyptian society by choosing the method of gradual development rather than that of a sudden leap, we have been able to restore to the Egyptian economy a large measure of its activity, vitality, and ability to produce, export, and provide employment opportunities for thousands of young people."

### Diagnosis and Cure

President Mubarak said: "The problems are still not over. However, the diagnosis has been accurate and the cure has not been a sudden one. Signs of health and strength have begun to appear again in the Egyptian economy in the fields of industry, agriculture, urban and rural development, and raising the level of services."

"There is no doubt that the achievement of stability in Egypt and in the Middle East would provide the climate necessary for pushing forward the wheel of economic progress and attracting investment."

### Similarity in the Two Experiments

President Mubarak said: "We find a considerable degree of similarity between the Chinese and Egyptian experiments in the area of economic reform, in spite of the peculiarities of each one. The transition from a policy of central planning to that of adopting market mechanisms, giving free rein to individual initiative, and having private enterprises, in addition to the important role played by community ownership, are among the common denominators of the two experiments."

President Mubarak added: "The nature of the experiment in economic reform in each of the two countries—that is, the experiment that took into consideration the special social circumstances of the two peoples in Egypt and China, or what we call the 'social dimension of the process of economic development'—was one of the more obvious aspects of similarity when it came to correcting the path of the economy and adapting it to the new economic circumstances which prevail in the world."

"Also, the development of the public sector, the creation of free trade zones, the policy of encouraging foreign investments, and the development of small industries are features of the Chinese experiment that are similar to the models we are following, on a smaller scale, of course, in our experiment in economic reform in Egypt."

President Mubarak asserted: "Both the Egyptian and Chinese experiments are the result of the nature of the circumstances of economic development in Egypt and China, and are not merely a blind response to some plans or advice that might not necessarily be appropriate for the distinctive features of the two economic experiments."

### Egypt's Ties to Asia

In response to a question concerning the general principles of Egypt's foreign policy and its policy toward the continent of Asia, President Mubarak said: "Egypt, as you know, is an African nation, but it is also an Asian nation by virtue of its location on the crossroads of the three great continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Furthermore, a part of Egypt's territory—Sinai—is in the continent of Asia."

He added: "The areas of Egypt's contemporary political influence, as well as the realms of Egypt's activity throughout the course of history, have been basically Africa and Asia due to Egypt's relations with the Arab peoples and nations starting many centuries ago and continuing till the present day."

"Egypt's ties to the Arab nations in Asia are not merely attributable to cultural and historical ties, but are also attributable to well-known vital economic interests, since the Egyptian economy is affected both directly and indirectly by the circumstances of the thousands of expatriate Egyptian workers in the Gulf nations."

"The developments experienced by the Gulf area since the beginning of the eighties have confirmed to what great degree the security situation in the Gulf affects the security of the Arab world and consequently the security of Egypt,"



and this was clearly shown during the eight-year war between Iraq and Iran and the Gulf war in 1990."

#### Cultural and Religious Ties

President Mubarak continued: "In addition to this, we of Egypt have cultural and religious ties to a large number of the Islamic nations and peoples in Asia, and this has impelled Egyptian policy to be oriented toward dedicating a large part of its concerns and activities to strengthening the bonds of mutual understanding between us.

"We cannot ignore the economic and political importance of the nations of Asia and the Pacific area, ties that have reached the point where they account for nearly half of the world's production and international trade. This leads us to predict that the 21st century will truly be the century of the continent of Asia, which is witnessing the appearance of large economic blocs.

"Because of all these objective considerations and in light of the traditional relations of friendship that have linked Egypt to most of the nations and peoples of Asia for a long time, Egyptian policy is pursuing an active diplomacy with most of the nations of the [Asian] continent on the political, economic, and cultural levels. For the sake of achieving security and stability in this continent, which is inhabited by most of the world's population, Egypt is exchanging visits and delegations with these nations and is following their developments with great interest, and is participating along with other nations and organizations of the international community in the search for solutions to the problems that may appear from time to time." [passage omitted]

#### Tariffs Reportedly Threaten Car Industry

94LD0048A Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic  
3 Apr 94 p 4

[Article by Jalal Rashid, Hani Salih, 'Ala' Mu'tamad, and Sulayman Fu'ad: "Car Experts: Plants Producing Compact Cars Face Threat of Stoppage Because of Customs Tariff; Reduction of Customs Tariff on Production Requirements to Protect National Industry; Unidentified Cars Invade Egyptian Markets"]

[Text] Egyptian plants producing compact cars, which have an engine capacity of less than 1,300 cubic centimeters (cc), are threatened with stoppage and with the loss of the big investments spent to build these plants, not to mention the displacement of a large number of workers because of stoppage or of reduced production. The reason for this is the reduction of customs tariffs on all cars with a capacity of less than 1,300 cc. This reduction has made these cars more salable than the car produced by Egyptian plants and has eliminated real competition between imports and local production because of the lower prices of imports.

We have in Egypt more than one plant that has begun to turn out production or is about to begin production, not to mention the al-Nasr Car Company production.

Car experts have demanded reduction of the customs tariff on the requirements needed to produce Egyptian cars of all capacities in order to protect this newborn industry from the ghoul of imports. The experts have also demanded that the car market be protected from numerous kinds of cars that are offered in the markets without any identification or country of origin and that carry international brand names. Officials must do this to safeguard Egypt's economy and its money.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Mun'im Sa'udi, head of the car dealers branch of the Cairo Chamber of Commerce, has said reduced tariffs on imported cars with a capacity of less than 1,300 cc has inflicted grave harm on domestic car plants at a time when these plants are making their first steps to meet the domestic demand for cars and to prepare to compete, even if at the price level only, with imported cars.

Dr. Sa'udi added that the government must not only consider securing cars for consumers at a price that is 5-percent or 10-percent cheaper. It must, at the same time, consider the national industry's future and must promote domestic investments that open the door for greater employment opportunities and that create other subsidiary industries around them.

He urged reduction of the customs tariff on imported components so that plants can reduce their costs and can compete anew with imported cars.

Engineer Salah-al-Din al-Khudari, the commissioned member of the Suzuki Egypt Corporation, has noted that the recent customs tariff amendments have harmed domestic plants from two angles: customs fees on imported cars have dropped by 10 percent, thus improving their chance to compete and, on the other hand, the increase of 4 percent in service fees has led to increasing the customs fees on imported components, which means an increase in the cost of the domestic product!

Al-Khudari also said that a continuation of this condition will compel the Egyptian producer to depart the domestic car market and that the door will be opened wide for the foreign product to occupy this market. Al-Khudari further added that domestic plants have been forced to lower their prices in order to survive in the market even though this reduction saddles them with added burdens, keeping in mind the constant rise in the costs of electricity, power, water, insurance, and taxes.

Al-Khudari went on to add that the increased new car supply in the market and the drop in the prices of these cars, both domestic and imported, has led to an increased demand for them and, consequently, to a drop in the demand for used cars and in the prices of these cars.

He has urged that controls be established on car imports and that car dealership owners be given the necessary protection so that they can perform their role and secure post-sale service to the consumer.

#### Requirements for Compact-Car Production

Husayn Abazah, deputy chairman of the Trade and Development Center, has said that reduced customs fees on compact cars will negatively affect the production of similar cars in Egypt.

Abazah has urged the government to reduce customs fees on requirements for the production of Egyptian compact cars so as to safeguard the investments that have been spent on this industry and to protect this industry's workers, especially since this newborn industry needs government protection. We have been urging full protection for more than a year, because aiding these plants by reducing the customs fees on the requirements for Egyptian compact-car production will enable local cars to compete with imported cars that have less than 1,300 cc engine capacity. Thus, we will preserve the investments that have been made in this field.

He stressed that Egyptian cars will find it very difficult to compete with imported cars with an engine capacity of less than 1,300 cc, especially in light of reduced customs fees on the imports. Therefore, the customs tariff concerning production requirements for cars with a capacity of less than 1,300 cc must be reconsidered.

Abazah said that Egyptian-produced cars with an engine capacity of 1,500-2,000 cc will not be affected by the recently announced customs tariff reduction and that the volume produced in Egypt has not been able to meet the growing demand for cars with a 1,500-2,000 cc capacity. Moreover, the price of the import exceeds the price of the similar domestic product by nearly 30 percent.

Husayn Abazah pointed out, however, that the domestic market for big cars produced in Egypt would, by necessity, be affected by the customs tariff reduction if such cars were produced in large numbers.

He urged officials to protect the car market and the Egyptian consumer from the entry of unidentifiable cars now that the door of imports has been opened. He said, "We don't know in what country these cars are produced, even though they carry international brand names. This will undermine the national wealth, because hard currency will be spent on importing such cars. Moreover, the hypothetical life span of these vehicles is 50 percent shorter than the life span of the genuine vehicle originating from the genuine source."

He stressed that the Egyptian consumer will suffer a big loss if he buys such vehicles.

#### Consumers Prefer Imports

An official source of al-Nasr Car Company has said that reducing the customs fees by 10 percent will affect the Egyptian car market, especially the production plants, negatively.

He added that the consumer will buy imports instead of the locally-produced types.

This official asserted that [domestic] car companies have begun to reconsider some current proposals to produce new car models in anticipation of chaos in the Egyptian car market.

#### Car Plants Face Threat of Closure

Majdi Mukhtar, the chairman of a new company operating in the field of passenger car production, has said that the 10-percent reduction in customs fees will inflict heavy losses on Egyptian car producers.

Mukhtar has proposed that the government provide a grace period of 4-5 years without any customs fee reduction in order to enable producers to increase the domestic component and reduce imported components used in car production.

Mukhtar also said, "On the other hand, the resource development fee can be raised by as much as the reduction in customs fees so as to make up for the customs fee reduction on the [imported] fully-manufactured commodity."

He said that he has invested an estimated 150 million pounds to build a new car factory, and that he will go ahead and produce the car, because complete stoppage means a big loss in the invested capital.

Mukhtar asserted that with the customs fee reduction, the fully-manufactured imported car will compete with the national production, thus exposing new investments to extreme risks that reach the extent of complete closure.

Faruq Ihsan, a car dealer, has said, "The used and new car markets are dominated by chaos and anticipation now that the customs tariff on cars with a capacity of less than 1,300 cc has been reduced. This condition will last for three months before the car market can regain its past condition.

"Used car prices will drop by no less than 20 percent now that new cars have no customs fees and that there has been a big increase in the used car supply."

Ihsan added, "Sales declined immediately after the tariff was announced, because buyers have stopped buying cars in the hope of getting the biggest reduction in car prices. They are entitled to do this because the price of a single car may drop by 7,000 pounds."

Ihsan further said, "Demand will be for new cars offered by dealers and companies on bank-guaranteed installments so as to take advantage of the 10-percent customs fee reduction. Moreover, all the buyer has to do is make a small down payment get a brand new car."

#### IRAQ

**INC Member on Need for International Observers**  
94LH0053A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 24 Apr 94  
p 15

[Article by Muhammad Bahr al-'Alum, member of the Executive Committee of the Iraqi National Congress: "The Need for Deploying International Observers in Iraq"]

[Text] Engulfed in crisis, the Iraqi people found a unique champion in the person of Max van der Stoep, the UN Human Rights Commissioner in Iraq, who took its cause to the highest international forums and preached a message of conciliation among nations that was missing from the international arena since the dictatorship assumed power 25 years ago.

Since his first report three years ago, van der Stoep reiterates the same call month after month and the more he repeats it the wider and longer becomes the list of crimes against individuals and groups in Iraq and the more the Special Commissioner bumps against international unwillingness to challenge tyranny. This unwillingness is exhibited by the same countries that turned their backs on the Iraqi people during the popular uprising of 1991 and whose technological weapons broke the backs of our heroes in the Iraqi north and south.

Van der Stoep is a supporter of our great people, who will remember him and other friends of the Iraqi people like him for centuries to come for the positions they took. We need to implement his recommendations today for the sake of fairness in the world and justice in Iraq.

We have called repeatedly, and shall continue to do so, for a secure region in the whole of Iraq, or in any part of it that would allow freedom to grow, as it grows and prospers today in the north of Iraq thanks to the international protection it enjoys.

Today, we are called upon to support and implement the recommendations of the Special Commissioner. By calling for the deployment of international observers to safeguard human rights throughout Iraq, he is in effect calling for a secure zone that would encompass all Iraqi lands—a zone where human rights are inviolate and where the Iraqi people are not targeted for genocide. We realize that the power and determination to do so are lacking today, but we insist on that just demand, hoping that we will have an opportunity in the near future to prove to the world that human rights and freedom in Iraq are of the essence for the stability of the region, just as oppression over a quarter century was at the core of deterioration and wars in and out of Iraq.

We remain hopeful today for the establishment of such a secure zone and for deploying international observers in all of Iraq, in our bloodied south, in our burnt regions, and in our abused Baghdad. Today we call against standing hand-tied before the crisis and for being diligent in seeking some means to realize the people's aspirations for freedom and for crippling the hand of dictatorship and staying it from oppressing and terrorizing the Iraqis.

We have a request in this connection that only takes a political resolution by the United Nations: deploy international human rights observers throughout our liberated northern Iraq and give them the official task of recording the facts and investigating conditions in Iraq from within Iraq.

Such an assignment would derive its legality from authorizing the observers to guarantee that everyone respects

human rights in our Iraqi north and guarantee respect for those human rights and the cessation of terrorist practices by the regime there. Other assignments for the observers would be to monitor and investigate instances of human rights violations by the regime in regions that still suffer under it, thereby fulfilling the commissioner's task; and to prepare for the direct coverage of human rights monitoring in the regions and towns that achieve liberation from dictatorship.

Such a direct implementation of the special commissioner's recommendations will not be sufficient and will not achieve its purpose for the time being, but it would represent a qualitative change that would put the regime on the defensive, for the first time since the Gulf war, about an operation linked to a fundamental issue that has to do with the people directly. That would restrain the regime's terrorism and atrocities and would lend efficacy to the pragmatic deployment of observers. It would be an accomplishment in that we would be delegating to the international community responsibility for the people's tragedy.

As we call for deploying international human rights observers in Iraq, we urge the leaders of the Arab and Muslim worlds and the UN secretary general to abandon their silence and stop ignoring our life and death issues. Are they going to let strangers to Arabdom and Islam, like van der Stoep, Emma Nicholson, and others, show more concern for and interest in our causes?

#### **Koranic Teaching in Schools Reported, Reviewed** *94LH0042A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 2 Mar 94* *pp 16-18*

[Article by Ma'sum Sa'di]

[Text] It is a great step for us to teach a child how to read and understand the Holy Koran beginning in elementary school to implement what the president-commander stipulated when he said, "It is necessary to formulate a plan under which the student understands the Koran thoroughly upon completion of secondary school."

However, for many reasons, students, guardians, and teachers of the Koran have voiced many complaints regarding the plan's implementation. For this report, we went around to the concerned parties to become familiar with the causes of the problem and students' and officials' opinions, hardships, and recommendations for mounting a successful campaign of faith that achieves the desired objective.

The importance and results of teaching the Holy Koran to students are obvious. Such instruction provides students with spiritual values and concepts by which they can correct what is wrong. It also helps them develop good language skills. Elementary school students memorize a suitable number of verses at each level. This develops their language skills and enriches their vocabulary with terms that they will use year after year.



Students and guardians have problems with the difficult instruction and the method used to convey it. The curriculum includes many long chapters of the Koran and is thus very intensive and difficult for the child to absorb. For example, the first-grade curriculum, like that of other levels, includes two books. One is the *Islamic Education Book*. It includes five chapters of the Koran for memorization ("The Opening," "The Purity of Faith," "Mankind," "Help," and "Abundance"), several religious teachings (e.g., prayer, the principles of Islam, and love of God and his Prophet), and short prophetic traditions. The other book is the Holy Koran for reading with a commentary on "its readings and its meanings." It includes more than 30 chapters. Is this not too much for a child to learn to read and write word by word?

Most believe that the *Islamic Education Book* is very adequate for this level. This is what Majidah Hamid, a teacher, says. She goes on to say that the Koran is very intensive and too advanced for first-grade students, and that the *Islamic Education Book* by itself more than adequately fulfills the desired purpose.

#### Unsupportive Method

The teaching method plays an important role and has a far-reaching effect on the psyche of the child and student. What is happening in our schools is that some teachers and instructors are not in harmony with the desired goal. Their method is unsupportive and tough rather than gentle to make the subject easy. This generates strong reactions.

One woman, Iman Jamil, relates her hardships as follows: My daughter, Halah, is in the third grade in elementary school. Her main problem concerns memorization of the Holy Koran. She weeps in fear of the teacher of this subject, who threatens to beat them and screams at them if one of them does not know how to read a word correctly or did not memorize a chapter well.

Halah's mother says that she does not know how to explain some of the meanings and verses about which Halah asks, which the mother finds to be beyond her daughter's age and educational level. Halah asks her about them continuously, because they are a part of the curriculum. For example, the chapter, "Women," deals with marriage and related matters, which are undoubtedly beyond the level of Halah, who is not yet 10.

An official source in the Education Ministry told us that the ministry has established a process in which parts of the Holy Koran are introduced at each academic level, from the first grade of elementary school through the sixth grade of middle school. He emphasized that the early levels start with short chapters. Also, the ministry has asked teachers not to require students to memorize chapters or verses of the Koran except for those specified in the instructions for each grade, aside from chapters and verses designated to be understood and explained generally. The ministry also prepared a manual called *From the Rules of Recitation* and distributed it to all teachers and schools in the country. The manual specifies the recitation rules, which must be learned in each grade.

Nonetheless, what is happening is raising questions!

Another important thing that we noted, about which many guardians complained to us, is the fact that teachers digress from the subject and speak of matters having no bearing on religion. The president-commander emphasized this point in a speech during a meeting with officials regarding elementary and secondary education. He said, "The Koran must be understood in a precise, integrated curriculum, without independent opinions and without development and expansion. We want to teach only the Koran."

Regarding this problem, let us present several illustrations of what some teachers have been doing in our schools.

Muhammad Talib is in the sixth grade of elementary school. He returned one day from school and removed all of the pictures hanging on the walls of his home, even those of his father and relatives. When his mother asked him why he did so, he told her that the teacher of the Holy Koran had told them that it is "forbidden" to hang pictures on the wall, because it violates religious teachings!

Wasan, a student in the third grade of middle school, is still a cause of dismay for her father. He has taken her from one physician to another because of her difficult psychological state, which induces a feeling of fear in her. She awakens at night from persistent nightmares and dreams of death, because the Holy Koran teacher speaks continuously and in detail of the nature of death, the size of the grave, the afterlife, how God will punish mankind, how the body disintegrates, and other details which have aroused fear and dread in the students' psyches.

There are many other examples and illustrations. Instruction in the Holy Koran has thus come to have side effects stemming from independent opinions and instructional [methods], which most students find difficult to endure. As a result, most families with children in school are experiencing difficulties.

#### Courses for Teachers Are Brief and Fast

In most cases, we find that the teacher is either strict or incompetent. In either case, the desired goal is not achieved, because the Koran is learned in a difficult manner. One factor contributing to this outcome is the failure, despite the importance of this subject, to select teachers who can teach the Koran effectively based on principles and methods that facilitate the explaining and understanding of this subject.

At present, teachers are not well prepared relative to the importance of the campaign. The Education Ministry has held training courses, but they have been brief and fast.

The teacher Iman 'Adnan: How can we convey an intensive curriculum in a simplified, understandable manner if it causes us hardship, and we find it difficult at times to absorb it? The Koran comprises foundations and principles, and the courses in which they enrolled us were very brief, lasting not more than a month. These courses covered 11 subjects, only four of which pertained to the subject. I do not know how "reasoning by analogy and adaptation" and other lessons from which we neither

derived nor understood anything are related to teaching the Holy Koran. This is a faith campaign. One would assume that it would be of adequate utility and not so abbreviated. What happened is that we were dismayed by an intensive, lengthy curriculum, which we were required to convey in a simplified manner to students who are still in the early stages of their education!

#### What the Concerned Parties Say

Our first thought was that the Awqaf and Religious Affairs Ministry—because it specializes in the principles and teachings of the Koran and all that pertains to it—would have a role in the faith campaign in the schools, whether by giving its opinion and advice or by helping to formulate the academic curriculum and select the teachers. This is certainly not to say that the Education Ministry lacks competence in this area. However, a specialist undoubtedly knows the subject of his specialty better than others. Accordingly, we went to the Awqaf and Religious Affairs Ministry, only to be surprised to learn that the ministry has had no involvement whatsoever in the matter, although it has expressed its willingness to help and is still willing to provide advice or help if asked to do so. The important thing is to achieve a positive outcome and a successful campaign.

To become familiar with the opinions and observations of specialists in the principles and teaching of the Holy Koran, we met with Dr. Muhyi Hilal al-Sirhan, the dean of the College of Islamic Sciences at Baghdad University. He spoke with us about teaching the Holy Koran and memorization of it to elementary school students. He said: The Koran is a rich source of vocabulary words, a sea of meanings and terms, and an inexhaustible treasure of meritorious morals and comely characteristics. It is worthwhile for us to explain to our elementary students an appropriate measure of the word of almighty God, which is the best word, and to have them memorize short chapters and then progressively longer chapters of the Koran. As to the memorization method at the early elementary level, the instructor should first use the conventional memorization techniques used in the schools. When the students become skillful in this initial phase and can memorize, they can then be assigned to memorize texts as homework. The memorization of texts in the school is carried out in steps. After the meanings and commandments of texts have been taught, and the students have become proficient in reading them aloud individually and collectively applying the rules and principles of Koranic recitation, written verses are then presented to the students on a blackboard, signboard, television screen, or card. After the students can consistently read the verses well, the teacher begins to gradually cover up words, first one word, then two, then three, and so on until an entire passage is covered. In this way, an entire chapter can be memorized, paying heed to the correct pronunciation "rules of Koranic recitation" and their practical application.

Shaykh Dr. 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Sa'di, the chairman of the Islamic Literature Association and a professor at the Institute of Imams and Preachers, finds that the teaching of the Holy Koran in a sound manner enables the student

to master the words of the Holy Koran. He believes that we should follow the method used in the traditional Kuttub [the lowest elementary level in the Koran schools], which focuses on memorization of the Holy Koran. This method consists of teaching children at the early elementary level the Arabic consonants and vowels and how they are connected. This is called spelling. Then the student is able to read any word in the Holy Koran. This method has its principles and rules. Academic research done in this area can be circulated to the teachers of the Holy Koran, who can be enrolled in courses for this purpose. Shaykh 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Sa'di continues: Perhaps it is said that this method is antiquated and not accepted by modern pedagogy. However, experimentation has proved that it is the only method for mastering the words of the Holy Koran.

Psychologically, the students' desire to recite the Holy Koran can be awakened by making it attractive and by easing the difficulties of which they complain. The class can be divided into groups that compete for a prize. Also, young students can be taught the purpose of reading the Koran by explaining to them God's reward in the afterlife and the benefit that the student will enjoy in his temporal life. The current curriculum being taught at the elementary and higher levels requires some revisions, namely the selection of short chapters for the lower levels, longer ones for the middle, and lengthy ones for the final levels.

#### Ideas and Recommendations

After we obtained these opinions and heard the hardships of students, their guardians, and concerned persons, the goal of all of us is still a successful faith campaign. The following are some recommendations for review and possibly use by officials and persons concerned with this subject:

- The teachers now responsible for teaching Koranic recitation are not experts in this area. This subject should be taught by specialists who have extensive experience in this field. The imams of mosques spread throughout the country can be used for this purpose, if only for a transitional period, until a complete Koranic cadre is trained. We also call for developing current teachers of the Holy Koran by enrolling them in long courses in the method for teaching and simplifying the subject.
- Reduction of the curriculum at the elementary levels: How nice it would be to limit the curriculum to the "Islamic Education Book in the first, second, and third grades inasmuch as it accomplishes the desired goal.
- We also call upon teachers of the subject to be patient and gentle, tolerate their students' mistakes, and descend to the level of their intellect and comprehension without violence, beating, or threats.

#### Baghdad Mayor Interviewed, Presents Plans, Problems

94LH0043A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 9 Mar 94 pp 20-21

[Interview with Baghdad Mayor Tahir Muhammad Has-sun, by Hamid 'Abdallah; place and date not given:

"Baghdad Mayor Wants Trustworthy City Administration"—first three paragraphs are ALIF BA' introduction]

[Text] Many questions crowded into my mind, each of them wanting priority over the others and each of them seeking a clear answer. Where shall I begin with Mr. Tahir Muhammad Hassun, the mayor of Baghdad? How much time do I need to satisfy my curiosity and come out with the result I desire?

The man gave me no opportunity to arrange my questions, for he spoke first, as if he had read my mind. He asked and answered, inquired and explained. My journalistic duty forces me to say that I heard not one word of justification from him. He did not take the role of defense attorney for his institution, as many do. Instead, I found him taking the side of the citizen against the apparatus of his department, many of whose practices he criticized.

He did not mince his words. He said there are negative phenomena that must be uprooted, corrupt elements of which the city administration must be cleansed. In this area there is dilatoriness; in that area there is negligence. Thus it was an interview more characterized by agreement than by disagreement and argument.

#### **Corrupt Officials, Out-of-Control Citizens**

[Abdallah] What is the first priority on your agenda?

[Hassun] Many tasks are competing for priority and precedence. I can list them as follows: Baghdad's cleanliness, maintaining the sewage system, repairing cave-ins, and keeping the drinking water network at the required purity.

[Abdallah] Have you given each of these its share of attention?

[Hassun] Our basic problem lies in our insufficient technical and human resources due to conditions of the embargo. The resources of a single municipal unit of metropolitan Baghdad in terms of engineering and mechanical effort used to equal the resources of the municipality as a whole after the embargo. Nevertheless, this situation does not warrant weak performance in any section. We must not make the embargo a peg on which to hang the persistence of the negative phenomena and conditions that emerge in various places. We must uproot and eradicate them whatever the circumstances. Accordingly, we must be on the scene to observe, monitor, and diagnose the places where defect hides. We must examine the efficiency of performance. Through intensive presence on the scene, we have discovered many negative phenomena and have rung the bell to announce that there are defects in two basic elements: the corrupt official and the out-of-control citizen.

[Abdallah] However, the directives and laws of the mayor's office have contributed to creating corrupt officials by giving lower-level staffs powers that enable them to treat people arbitrarily.

[Hassun] That is true. We have dealt seriously with the matter by restricting penal powers to high-level staffs—specifically, in the field monitoring apparatus, the unit

directors, and general directors. We noticed that the lower-level staffs that had power and authority to fine and punish had begun to collude shamefully with violators. A minor city official could be bought for a paltry price. With the taste of his free lunch still in his mouth, he would become a defender of the restaurant owner who threw trash into the middle of the street. He would also be accustomed to taking his cut from storekeepers—each in his specialty. An official could get his food free from a restaurant owner, have his hair cut without fee by the barber, have his car repaired without cost at the mechanic's, and take regular protection money from wrongdoers, turning a blind eye to their misdeeds in return. He would see people throw trash and oil into the sewer lines or leave it wherever they wanted, and would turn his eyes—and the city be damned! I say this in sadness and bitterness, after having uncovered many such elements and having been forced to dismiss them and cleanse the city bureaucracy of them. If you ask me what the duty of the lower-level staffs should be, I say that their real duty is to monitor the movement of garbage trucks. This is their duty according to the ordinance of the city of Baghdad. Anyone who likes this duty is welcome; anyone who doesn't—goodbye to him!

[Abdallah] This means that the number of inspectors has become restricted to the number of unit and general directors. Do you think this number insufficient to monitor the streets of Baghdad, as extensive as they are?

[Hassun] Our mission is not to give punishments and fines to citizens. Our goal is to establish behavior and models that citizens respect, rather than what a city official wants. What harm would there be if the administration's upper staff, starting with the mayor and ending with the unit directors, turned into inspectors, if that protected citizens from the blackmail of the weak-spirited and realized the noble end we all seek—the cleanliness of our beloved Baghdad? I am sure that if citizens see real, just, and serious oversight, they will be eager to obey the municipal laws. Thus we shall achieve the desired goal of municipal discipline.

#### **Major Blight**

[Abdallah] This concerns the commercial and tourist districts. What about the residential districts? Garbage has begun to accumulate in some of them until there are tall piles of trash, as well as overflowing and clogged sewers.

[Hassun] I agree with you that our service efforts in the residential districts are not at the desired level. This is because our attention now is focused on the tourist and commercial districts. If the service units we have established in the commercial and tourist streets bear fruit, and if the sanitation contractors can carry out their duties successfully and trustworthily despite our observations against them, we shall be able to move a large part of our service effort to the residential districts. We hope to do this shortly.

[Abdallah] While we are on the subject of sanitation contractors, are you satisfied with their work? Didn't the



city administration cancel its contracts with them not too long ago, and then contract with them again? What was the reason?

[Hassun] Necessities required that we again enter into contracts with the contractors. In the past, some of them were selected on dishonest principles. But I am for encouraging and supporting the experiment if correct, sound, and honest formulas are found. I think that large sanitation companies must be created, as are found in many countries. Although we have recorded our observations against some of them, we are not hesitating to support by various formulas and means those that are dedicated.

[Abdallah] You announced that all the pumps draining the water of the sewers would be repaired. Yet despite the shortage of water in the current winter season, many of Baghdad's streets have been flooded. What was the cause?

[Hassun] There are 259 main water drainage stations in Baghdad, with 910 vertical and submerged pumps. There are 6,000 km of rain, sewage, and shared pipes, in addition to 600,000 rain water grills scattered throughout the city of Baghdad. You can imagine the effort required to maintain and repair this complicated large network that has not been given any real maintenance since it was built until the time of the broad campaign we have undertaken for this purpose.

The overflows that flooded the streets had many causes. For one thing, rain water grills became blocked because trash had accumulated in them and because grease had been discarded. There were also the cave-ins that the sewer network has suffered—between 25 and 30 every month, some medium-sized, some big, with depths from 1 to 9 meters. Add to this the obsolescence of the sewer network and the effect of the 30-nation aggression, which was accompanied by a complete stoppage of the drainage pumps. This led to a rise in the level of stagnant water and its not being drained. The result was instability of the ground, not to mention the obvious effect in this regard of the flood season that the country experienced in 1988. However, I concentrate here on an essential cause—what I would call the “killer cause”—misuse of the drainage networks by citizens.

Surely you have heard about the blockage of the sewers in Saddam City. We made a field investigation of the state of the sewer system there and found—marvel of marvels!—we discovered that all the waste and residue that the industrial district in Kisrah and 'Atash produces are thrown into the sewers—grease, automobile parts, tires, and animals. What network is there that could swallow all these objects? What pumps could get rid of them? We diagnosed three main sources of damage to the sewage system in Saddam City: street vendors, the industrial district in Kisrah and 'Atash, and the popular markets.

We have formulated a plan to clean up and maintain the sewer system in Saddam City in coordination with the General Federation of Labor Unions. Shop owners in Kisrah and 'Atash will bear part of the cost of maintaining and cleaning up the sewers. We have collected 3 million dinars for this purpose. As a first step, we have built 13

regular lots for street vendors in the whole of Baghdad. We have taken the initiative to fence and pave the popular markets. We have set a time limit for completing this task not to exceed three months.

#### Flight From “Repellent Occupation”

[Abdallah] One notices that many residential-district open spaces designated as parks have become areas to collect garbage. Aren't the units of the Baghdad municipal administration concerned about these areas?

[Hassun] The natural place for these wastes is the sanitation burial area 50 km from the center of the city of Baghdad. But because of a shortage of vehicles to transport waste, we have been forced to create temporary trash collection areas. The trash will be transported later to the sanitation burial area. Therefore, the areas to which you referred have to be cleaned up, and their trash must be taken to the temporary collection areas. The reason for its accumulation has to do with the lack of resources in city administration units, as I mentioned to you at the beginning of the interview.

[Abdallah] Haven't you found a means to deal with the phenomenon of citizens' aversion to taking jobs and positions with the Baghdad city administration?

[Hassun] The essential reason for aversion to working in some city occupations is social attitude, which cannot be remedied by administrative decree. Nevertheless, in order to create incentives sufficient to overcome this phenomenon, we have established a system of incentives and productivity criteria. We have granted the general directors full powers for this purpose. However, city occupations remain “repellent occupations,” rather than “attractive” ones.

[Abdallah] What was the first negative phenomenon you remedied after you assumed responsibility for Baghdad's city administration?

[Hassun] The first slogan I raised was: “War on lying.” No one shall make me hear the words “Yes, sir!” without their being accompanied by honest and exact implementation. I have continued to make war on liars and dishonest people. My ultimate goal is to cleanse the city administration of corrupt people and reward and support those who are sincere and honest.

[Abdallah] We said goodbye to the mayor of Baghdad, having taken from his office an important fact—that the mayor has assumed a heavy legacy of bureaucracy, job corruption, and administrative idling. As a result, bad money in the Baghdad administrative has driven out the good. This equation he is determined to reverse. May none but the trustworthy remain trustees!

#### ISRAEL

##### Sanctity of Eretz Yisra'el, Life Discussed

94AA0061A Tel Aviv HATZOFI in Hebrew  
25 Mar 94 p 6

[Article by Professor A. Har'el Fish: “Eretz Yisra'el and the Question of Preserving Life”]

[Text] The religious community in all its diversity is split on the issue of its duty regarding Eretz Yisra'el in these days of historical decisions on which depend the future of the people and the state. In truth, the disagreement on this subject is not between the parties: the NRP [National Religious Party], Shas [Torah Observing Sephardim], Degel Hatorah, and Agudat Yisra'el, rather it is more correct to say that it exists within each of these parties. In each of them, there are at least two schools of thought that are opposed on this subject. Often, the split passes even within the religious family unit, when the son (or the father) believes that peace as a high Jewish value is preferred over all else, and that this is what is on the agenda, and the father (or the son) is convinced with all his heart and his soul that there is no holier duty today than the duty to ensure the territorial integrity of the country as it is now held by us. Such a disagreement on principles is, perhaps, legitimate.

Everyone can bring evidence from our forefathers to strengthen his position, and the things are known. At the time of one crisis, it was said of Abraham "and he mustered his retainers" and then he smote the four kings; and on another occasion he made an alliance with Avimelech, King of the Philistines, over the division of the country; Jacob, our father, struggled all night with Esau's man and overcame him, but in other circumstances castigated Shim'on and Levy for the deed against Shechem. I do not seek first of all to establish which way suits the situation to which we are now subject, even though I have a clear opinion on the subject. I seek to argue against posing the question as an ordinary Halakhic question of what is permissible and what is forbidden, which can be resolved with the customary tools.

In fact, both of the schools of thought rely on Halakhic arguments. The "hawkish" school of thought links the question with a positive commandment (according to the Ramban's system) "to inherit the land" and with the injunction against transferring ownership over the land of Yisra'el to foreigners. And the conclusion is that one must not relinquish portions of Eretz Yisra'el that returned to us in one way or another, and on the basis of these commandments, the State of Israel must continue to maintain its rule over all areas of the country that were conquered miraculously in the Six-Day War. The "dovish" school of thought does not deny the validity of the two aforementioned commandments, but the rabbis of this school do not view themselves as authorized to conclude from them a clear military or political conclusion, on account of the calculation of "the sanctity of life," which, as is known, supersedes all the commandments of the Torah except regarding the shedding of blood, incest, and idolatry, about which we were warned, "be killed and do not transgress." As for the transfer of the ownership over areas of Eretz-Yisra'el to foreigners the rule of the sanctity of life applies, that is, "transgress and do not be killed." Moreover, if the subject is "the sanctity of life of the community," that is, a danger to the entire people or a large part of it due to the observance of the commandment, then of course the Torah

does not require of us such a price to hold on to all of Eretz-Yisra'el and to prevent the transfer of this or that area to foreign owners.

According to this school of thought, only one question remains: who will determine whether in our situation today there is a fear for "the sanctity of life of the community" that must bring us to a withdrawal? And the answer is that on this the various experts will decide, experts on politics and experts in military matters, and according to the teaching that they tell us, we will act. If they decide to relinquish, we will relinquish, and if they decide to stand firm, we shall stand. To what is this similar? To a sick person for whom the Shabbat must be desecrated. The doctor determines whether the law of "the sanctity of life" applies to his illness or not. Military men and politicians are, as it were, the doctors of our situation.

#### Between a Verdict and a Torah Opinion

I present these views in general terms as they have been understood among the broad religious public and without going into all of the Halakhic details (and without going into the difference between "a verdict" and "a Torah opinion," which, of course, is important), and my question is: what is the nature of this disagreement? From the Torah-religious viewpoint, has the question been posed properly? Do the rules of this legal debate indeed apply to the problem at hand?

First, let us ask the "hawkish" school of thought. Is there really a complete correspondence between the subject of the sale of lands and the transfer of the ownership over them to foreigners, which is a simple, ordinary question, and the defense or the relinquishing of areas of the homeland, which is an existential-national question? It seems that in the time of monarchy in Israel such fateful questions were handed over to the decision of the king, who was to consult about it with the High Priest and with the Sanhedrin according to the "decision of the Urim" (see *Numbers* 27:21, and see *Tractate Yoma*, page 73). And such matters do not belong to the regular Halakhic level, but are instead much more serious. If the Sanhedrin decides on war, it decides on life and death, on existence, and its decision is definitely liable to result in a heavy price in human life. And if the Sanhedrin decides in the decision of the Urim on "withdrawal" at a certain moment of danger, it does not appear that such a decision transgresses the ordinary injunction against selling lands and transferring the ownership to foreigners.

In short, there are two levels here, one governmental-existential, and the other legal-Halakhic, and an emphasis on the legal-Halakhic aspect weakens the arguments of the "hawkish" school of thought in the eyes of many, both religious and secular, who do not regard our big political question today as an affair that belongs to the ordinary sphere of what is allowed and what is forbidden, regarding which one may ask a learned question and act according to the Halakha laid down in the Shulkhan Arukh or in the "Yad Hahazaka."

Here, as was said, is the weak side of the "hawkish" school, but the great advantage of the members of this school of

thought is that they view the question of Eretz Yisra'el and its protection as mainly a **religious** question. A question that must not be removed from the realm of faith and abandoned to ordinary politicians, and ordinary military men. Even though we said that questions of this kind belong to a level called "the decision of the Urim," that, too, is an institution among the institutions of the Torah and belief, where the calculations are not solely political. While this institution does not exist in our time, this does not mean that the approach is invalid, that the principle of "the decision of the Urim" is invalid for the Jew who believes in the Torah and the Prophets. This Jew feels in the nature of things that his faith obligates him precisely on the fateful questions of today, and that the trust in Hashem [God], who is the savior and redeemer of Israel, is a foundation that must be reflected in practical decisions and in political and military moods. And here is expressed not only a legitimate religious calculation, but even the main points of his belief.

The "dovish" side in the disagreement starts, as it were, with the assumption that here there is no ordinary Halakhic problem, and as it is connected with political-military calculations, it hands over the operational responsibility to "experts" in this matter. But, in fact, the Halakhic calculation is narrower for them than it is for the "hawks." For them, the whole matter is reduced to the question of "the sanctity of life," that is, the legal permission that is given to violate injunctions for the sake of saving lives. And it may be asked: does the Halakhic mechanism of "the sanctity of life" apply to the question at hand? Is the question whether to withdraw from Jerusalem and the cities of Judaea really on the same plane as the question whether to violate or not to violate the Shabbat for a seriously ill person? Should not the question of "the sanctity of life" have been kept in mind by, for example, the rebels of the Warsaw Ghetto when they decided what they decided, or by the defenders of Kfar 'Etzyon during the War of Liberation? If we pose the problems in that manner, we will arrive at absurdities. Perhaps it would turn out that Mattityahu and his sons should not have risen up against the Greeks, and that during the siege of Jerusalem in the time of Hizkiyahu, the King, they should have surrendered to Sennacherib and not endangered the life of the nation by a stubborn stand for their independence! It is clear that here we have again arrived at the sphere called "the decision of the Urim," or, more correctly, the commandment to martyrdom, where the mechanism of "the sanctity of life" does not apply in its ordinary form.

#### **The Sanctity of Life and the Sanctity of the Life of the Nation**

There is no doubt that this aspect of the problem was not obscured to the rabbis, including the luminaries of the generation who studied it and determined here the foundation of "the sanctity of life of the nation." They know well that on fateful questions the Jewish people always puts its life at stake "for our people and for the cities of our Lord," and that the path of redemption is also the dangerous path. If that is the case, why are they not ready to relate to the question of Eretz Yisra'el and its borders

today as such a question, a question of faith, that is, a religious-creedal challenge of the highest order? And why do they not come out with the traditional call: "Be strong and let us get stronger for our people and for the cities of our Lord"? Their answer will surely be that the whole matter of "the decision of the Urim" is simply not customary today, as it depends upon institutions such as the Temple, the Sanhedrin, and the High Priests, that do not now exist. And for that reason, the religious leadership has no status in decisions in the political sphere.

Such an answer, as I have formulated it, seems logical. It is correct that we do not have a Sanhedrin and there is also no chance that this institution will soon reappear. But the answer is nevertheless evasive, and cannot satisfy the believing public that lives the events of today. We must first of all ask, who are "the diplomatic and military experts" who are to be relied upon in the present crisis? One division of statesmen and military men will tell us that the great danger to our existence will come if we do not withdraw from Jerusalem and from Judaea and Samaria. A different division of military men and statesmen, no less honorable and impressive, will tell us that the danger of extinction lies in wait for us precisely if we give in to the pressures and withdraw from the territories. So, who are the right experts whose opinion we are to accept? If we examine the qualifications of the various "experts," we shall see that there is not and it is not possible for there to be a scientific and objective approach such as in the case of the doctor and the sick person. Everyone brings to the question under discussion his ideological baggage. The men of the left determine their position according to their outlook, "which—if we formulate it briefly—is peace and brotherhood with the Arabs as a supreme goal. The men of the right determine their position according to their ideological position, which gives preference to national honor and independence. The chasm yawns on either side of the thin rope upon which we tread. One tells us to step in this direction, and one tells us to step in that direction—each one according to his ideological considerations. Because the situation is exactly a situation of astonishing uncertainty regarding the results of either step, but, nevertheless, we are not exempt from the obligation to decide.

Is it precisely in this situation that the voice of the basic Jewish faith will be silenced? Must the great ones of the Torah close their eyes in this situation and pass the decision to the would-be "experts", that is, to the men of the secular parties—who, in the final analysis, will make a determination according to their ideological considerations? Will only the place of the faithful Jews be empty when these great questions are decided? I would be surprised!

The transfer of the decision to experts also means ignoring the way that decisions are made in a democratic society. Here there is no king or ruler that is all-powerful. The citizen must participate in the decision. He bears responsibility for the future of the nation—a responsibility that he cannot shift to experts. Or, if you will, we are all "experts." What is under discussion is an international



and military situation whose main components are known to all of us. We all feel the dangers, and we shall all pay the price of mistaken judgements. And, if we speak in more concrete terms, some of the religious parties that are sitting today in the Knesset are known to have tremendous, and even decisive, influence over the course of diplomatic affairs. I refer mainly to Shas, but also to Agudat Yisra'el. Even though they are not for the moment sitting in the government, it is clear to everyone that in the given parliamentary situation, the coalition is not capable of functioning and implementing its withdrawal plan without the support (or, at least, their nonopposition) of the many members of Knesset from these parties. This means that they and their leaders have an unprecedented responsibility for the fate of the people and of the state.

### To Fulfill the Religious-Jewish Faith

Can it be that in such a situation they will shift their responsibility over to "experts"? What is this like? It is like the question whether to accept or not to accept the opinion of the 10 spies who asserted that it was not possible to conquer the country and to hold it. These were without a doubt the first "experts" of that generation. Not only that as a matter of course they were chosen for their public qualifications and their defense knowledge, but their status as experts was strengthened after they had travelled through the land and examined it thoroughly for forty days! There is also no doubt that the data that they gave on the security-military situation, about the difficulties, and about the character of the natives, had a foundation. It was only that their conclusions were mistaken due to a lack of faith and trust in Hashem. As Yehoshu'a Bin Nun and Caleb Ben Yefune asserted afterwards. Yehoshu'a and Caleb did not deny the data that their colleagues had provided. They rejected only their conclusions, and insisted that the decision making had to take into account also the factor of trust in Hashem and of fear of Hashem: "If Hashem wants us and he will bring us to this country and will give it to us!"

It is clear that we must today, as believing Jews, be guided by our ideological considerations, and among these the great principle of "Hashem is with us, do not be afraid." If all the men of the secular parties bring their ideological baggage, we can take into account the foundations of the Torah and the faith, and it is even our duty to do that. Because it was for that that the representatives of the religious parties were elected by their voters. Their representatives were not elected in order to decide according to the weltanschauung of Karl Marx, and not even according to the position of Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Rather it is their duty to fulfill their religious-Jewish belief in the everyday life of the state, including the great questions of foreign affairs and defense, and, perhaps, first and foremost regarding those questions. Because among them, "security" can never be just security, rather security with a double meaning.

And if nevertheless the esteemed rabbis who stand at the head of these parties prefer to evade their responsibility and to hand it over to others—that is, to "defense experts"—there will be no avoiding the conclusion that

they are not ready to ascribe a religious significance to the great redemptions of our times, including the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War. They are not ready to see in these events "a way to pass to redemption," something that requires us to take a stand on the diplomatic questions. This approach is reminiscent of the approach of some of the Torah greats in Eastern Europe at the beginning of Zionism, who were not willing to view the Zionist Movement and the beginning of the renaissance in Eretz Yisra'el as "a way to pass to redemption." And for that reason, they actually abandoned the whole matter of the return to Zion to the hands of the secular camp. This comparison is depressing and unfortunate. In retrospect, it may be determined today that the reservation of the chiefs of "Agudat Yisra'el" from the year of 5672 [1912] until World War II did not exactly bring a blessing to the people of Israel. And, therefore, it is to be hoped that in the end, Shas will not repeat the same tragic mistake of the early days of Zionism.

If we have learned to hear the voice of the Lord of Israel speaking to us from the tempest of history, let us not today seal our ears and behave as if there is no religious significance to the great events of our times, including the ingathering of the exiles in tremendous proportions, and including our return to Jerusalem, to the cities of Judaea, to the Temple Mount, and to the Western Wall. Here there is no fata morgana, rather a revolution in the life of our people. Our eyes see voices, and our eyes see the pillar of fire that lights up the night for us. If we do not respond as a religious public to this great challenge, it is as if we were agreeing with the haters of Israel who assert that the Torah and its scholars belong to the past, and that we do not have a part in the future of the nation. And to such a version, the vast majority of the religious public will not lend its hand.

## SYRIA

### Leaders Address Foreign Trade Issues

94AF0188A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic  
4 May 94 p 10

[Article by Ra'uf Qubaysi and Suzannah Tarbush: "We Seek To Bolster Our Trade Relations With Britain, To Build Modern State, and To Lay Down Bases of Democracy"]

[Text] Dr. Muhammad al-'Imadi, Syria's minister of economy and foreign trade, has asserted that Syria is keen on bolstering its trade relations with Britain. He said that his country "seeks to build a modern state, to achieve development, and to lay down the bases of democracy."

The Syrian minister made the statements yesterday at a symposium that followed the inauguration of a Syrian products fair, entitled "Made in Syria" and sponsored by the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce in London. The fair will continue until 6 May 1994.

The Syrian minister touched on his country's economic policy, saying that Syria is working to achieve economic independence and to take advantage of advanced knowledge in the science and technology area "while it bolsters

the Arab economic cooperation procession." He added that the backbone of Syria's socio-economic and political system is an economic plurality that "guarantees every individual's economic freedom." He pointed out that economically this means the "presence of a public sector along with a private sector and a joint sector."

Al-'Imadi said that one of the important distinguishing marks in the Syrian economic procession is the process of gradual opening up to the market economy "in which the public sector coexists with a competing private sector." He pointed out that Syria launched this process by educating the people and preparing them to accept these principles "so the experiment will proceed in a fashion that spares the country social and political obstacles." He also said that Syria has managed, despite the recent difficult years, to raise its gross national product (from 83 billion Syrian pounds to 410 billion pounds in 1993).

On inflation, al-'Imadi said that it was reduced from 26.3 percent in 1985 to 5.7 percent in 1993 "when capital components rose from 20 billion pounds in 1985 to 100 billion pounds in 1993, and when the exports and imports volume rose from 33.8 billion pounds in 1987 to 60.7 billion pounds in 1993."

Minister al-'Imadi also touched on political relations between his country and Britain, saying that they are good and that mutual visits between Syrian and British ministers "have laid down the foundations of mutual understanding between the two countries on problems facing the Arab region and the world."

He added, "I still recall Mrs. Margaret Thatcher's visit to Syria when she was the shadow cabinet prime minister. Our president welcomed her and introduced her to his family members." Al-'Imadi further added, "I also still recall the post-World War II period when British forces ousted Vichy's military regime from Syria when Syria's wheat was the source of the bread that fed Allied troops in our region."

He also said that the accord, which he had the honor to sign in Damascus in 1976 with Michael Mitcher, the then deputy minister for parliamentary affairs [name and title as published] "is still the basis on which relations between our two countries are founded."

Al-'Imadi noted that the said accord called for bolstering economic relations and industrial exchange in the service of both sides. The accord further called for establishing a British-Syrian Council to achieve various objectives, including determination of the areas from which both sides can benefit and examination of the means that ensure the implementation of development projects.

He said that the aforementioned council met in April 1980 and underlined the importance of increasing trade between Britain and Syria and of visits by businessmen's delegations, as well as the benefit of participation in trade fairs, particularly specialized fairs.

Minister al-'Imadi welcomed foreign investments in his country, saying, "Syria enjoys numerous advantages, including geographic position; a balanced industrial base

that includes agriculture, oil and gas, industry, tourism, and commerce; a significant market of 13 million people; trade ties between Syria and the Arab countries; tax exemptions offered by Syria's investment laws; the stability Syria has achieved in the past one-quarter century; the availability of labor and skilled manpower; the presence of large groups of energetic businessmen; and people's openness and their ability to cooperate with others."

The "Made in Syria" fair is the first Syrian products fair organized outside the Arab world. A total of 160 Syrian companies have participated in it. The fair opening was attended by hundreds of Arab and foreign businessmen, plus Arab ambassadors and officials and a Syrian delegation comprised of 10 individuals representing Syria's various ministries. Displayed products range from food products to traditional and modern products and textiles, machines, and other products.

At the symposium, held at the Hilton Hotel, Sir Richard Beaumont, the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce chairman, said in the address with which he opened the symposium that the fair idea "was welcomed by our Syrian friends."

The discussion touched on Syria and focused on its political importance in the Middle East. It also highlighted Syria's trade importance in history "when it was a sea region [engaged] in the silk and frankincense trade."

On the sidelines of the symposium, AL-HAYAH interviewed Muhammad Khadr, Syria's ambassador to Britain, who said that now that British-Syrian relations have improved, "especially since British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd's visit to Syria," the idea of the fair has become necessary.

Khadr added that the fair comes within the context of bolstering trade between Britain and Syria, of "familiarizing British export and import companies with Syrian products, and of providing the opportunity to Syrian businessmen from the public, private, and joint sectors to take part in this fair, which we consider more of a demonstration than a fair."

In a related development, AL-HAYAH has also interviewed Dr. Ratib al-Shallah, chairman of the Chambers of Commerce Union and of the Damascus Chamber of Commerce. He pointed out that the idea of the fair emanates from Syria's keenness on the future, "especially since what we produced a few years ago wasn't enough for us, whereas we produce a surplus now as a result of the projects implemented in accordance with Investment Law No. 10 of 1991."

Al-Shallah noted that the goal of the fair is to familiarize the Syrian producer with world markets "so he can hear praise, criticism, and recommendations; so he can learn the type of standards demanded by the world market; and so he can be in constant contact with available technologies that enable him to compete in world markets."

Despite praising his country for producing an agricultural and industrial surplus, al-Shallah said that Syria does not want to encounter a crisis of production surplus for which

there are no markets, "whether at home or abroad or in terms of quality or of prices."

Answering a question on whether displayed products reflect the degree of development achieved by Syria in the industrial and agricultural sectors, al-Shallah, who is a prominent Syrian businessman, said, "The fair doesn't at all reflect the true character of Syria's agricultural and industrial production." He added that officials of the Chambers of Commerce Union and of the Damascus Chamber of Commerce were not able to contact all producers, especially those who have no surplus to sell. "But we expect that participation by Syrian producers in future fairs will be much stronger."

Adib Ghanam, the assistant information minister, said in the question-and-answer session of the symposium that in addition to the current television channel, Syria plans to establish a television channel operated by artificial satellites. He told AL-HAYAH that Syria has concluded an agreement with Arabsat, Arab Satellite, to start transmitting via artificial satellites by 1996. He said that the channel will transmit in Arabic and English.

Martin Baker, the official in charge of the branch that deals with British exports to Asia, Africa, and Australia at the British Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has said that Mike Heseltine, the British secretary of trade and industry, has decided that Syria will be included in a list of 80

countries to which Britain aspires to export. Baker added that tourism is the most attractive sphere of investment in Syria currently.

A participant asked Dr. al-'Imadi if multiple currency exchange rates continue to exist in Syria and if there is a possibility of floating Syrian currency or of establishing a single uniform price for the Syrian pound in the near future. The minister answered, "The purpose of the policy embraced by the Syrian Government recently is to unify the exchange rates so they will be as close to the market rate as possible." Al-'Imadi noted that unifying the various exchange rates has created the so-called "neighboring countries exchange rate."

Al-'Imadi added that customs tariffs have been applied as of the beginning of this month on the basis of the average exchange rate, which is 23 pounds per dollar instead of 11.25 pounds per dollar, excluding foodstuffs and raw materials. However, al-'Imadi warned that changing exchange rates dictates that the Syrian Government be aware of the social ramifications.

Dr. Ratib al-Shallah said that, even though it is desirable to have a unified exchange rate, the step could be "costly" to some people. As an example, he cited the question of applying an exchange rate of 44 or 45 pounds per dollar to assess customs tariffs. He said that such a rate would pose hardship to the working classes and to people with a limited income.



## INDIA

**Air Force Lists Options To Counter Pakistan**

94AS0284A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*  
in English 28 Apr 94 p 9

[Article by Dinesh Kumar: "India's Options To Match Pak Threat"]

[Text] New Delhi, April 27—The Indian Air Force is understood to have submitted several options before the government to meet threats emerging from Pakistan's likely acquisition of 38 more multi-role F-16 fighters from the United States.

Among the options under active consideration is a package comprising an additional squadron of the Russian Mig-29, a unirole air superiority fighter, along with up to three more squadrons of the French Mirage-2000 multi-role aircraft. The IAF [Indian Air Force] presently has two and three squadrons each of the Mirage-2000 and Mig-29 aircrafts. However, a proposal to induct an additional squadron each of the Mirage-2000 and Mig-29, submitted during the tenure of the former chief of air staff, Air Chief Marshal N.C. Suri, has been hanging fire for almost two years now on account of indecision and the prevailing resource crunch.

Other options projected by the IAF include induction of a second multi-role fighter variant in addition to the Mirage-2000 and even examining the Russian offer to jointly produce the long range Su-27 interceptors, which have already been acquired by China.

Looking beyond the figure of 38 F-16s that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) is set to acquire, the IAF requirement projections are catering for the total 71 more such aircraft that Pakistan is seeking to obtain from the United States. Taking into account the 37 F-16s already in the PAF's inventory, the IAF is drawing up long-term plans to counter the final figure of 108 F-16s or six squadrons worth of this nuclear weapon delivery capable aircraft that the PAF hopes to have before the end of this century.

In principle, the IAF is of the opinion that the multi-role nuclear weapon delivery capable F-16 has to be met with a multi-role aircraft. While the IAF is interested in the more advanced 'M' version of the Mig-29 (India presently only has the Mig-29B version), this aircraft type alone will not be the answer to the F-16 since the Mig-29 is essentially a unirole interceptor.

Similarly, defence experts point out that a unirole deep penetration strike aircraft would again not be viable since a strike mission would require a package of air defence aircraft for protection against enemy interception. This would involve many more aircraft per mission not to mention cost of fuel and the time involved.

A multi-role aircraft could switch roles from strike to air defence and vice versa. Till now the two PAF F-16 squadrons comprising 37 aircraft were matched by IAF's two Mirage-2000 squadrons comprising 45 aircraft (including reserve). Besides, the two present PAF F-16 squadrons were more likely to be involved in air defence

roles owing to fewer numbers of this aircraft type available to them and the fact that Pakistan lacking in geographical depth needed superior aircrafts to protect high value targets such as its all important nuclear programme facility at Kakuta, Karachi port, Sargodha and Chaklala air bases, etc.

But with a total six squadrons of F-16s, defence experts point out that the balance would be substantially tilted in the PAF's favour providing it with a phenomenal long arm and rendering vulnerable many key locations of strategic importance located deep inside Indian territory. These include Bombay High, the vast industrial complex stretching from Ahmedabad to Bombay, the HAL and IAF Mig-27 and Mig-23 assembly and overhauling facilities at Ozhar not to mention New Delhi, the Mathura refinery, etc.

Significantly, while all variants of three F-16s are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, the IAF has no such aircraft which includes the Mirage-2000H that it has. The numerical strength that the IAF enjoys vis-a-vis the PAF holds no value owing to two main reasons. Firstly, the IAF has to cater to its vast borders on both the western and eastern fronts, and secondly, owing to the old vintage of IAF's aircraft. While the bulk of the PAF fighter fleet is of medium to state-of-the-art technology, the bulk of IAF's fleet ranges from medium to low technology.

In fact a new area of concern is the nine odd squadrons of the Type 77 and Type 96 variants of the Mig-21 that the IAF will be phasing out by the end of this century. In any case these aircraft have already outlived their life and cannot be put to frontline use. From where will the IAF find a replacement? One possibility is buying up the Mig-29 assembly line which was offered to India in the 1980s. Another option is to accept the Russian offer to jointly produce the Su-27.

But whatever be the final outcome, it is evident that IAF's answer to the PAF's F-16s will rest on the sole consideration of resources available to buy matching aircraft. A Mig-29 will not be less than Rs 50 crores [rupees] a piece while a single Mirage-2000 will not cost less than Rs 80 crores. An expensive proposition no doubt, but prosperity has always hinged on security.

**Minister Explains Ban on Foreign Newspapers**

94AS0284I Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English  
29 Apr 94 p 5

[Text] New Delhi, April 28—The Information and Broadcasting Minister, Mr K.P. Singh Deo, today said foreign newspapers would not be allowed entry into India till the Cabinet had examined the issue in all its implications, reports UNI.

Replying to a two-day debate in the Rajya Sabha on the working of his Ministry, Mr Singh Deo said the final decision would have to be taken by the Cabinet as his Ministry alone was not competent to decide the issue

He said the Government's current stand was based on a Cabinet decision of 1955 which had disfavoured the entry of foreign newspapers.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Cabinet had taken the decision following the recommendation of the first Press Commission which had studied the issue of ownership of newspapers.

It had recommended against permitting Indian editions of foreign newspapers even with Indian equity participation. He informed the House that the issue had been debated in the country and there were some court cases.

Mr Singh Deo said the study to be conducted by the Centre of Media Studies would be completed in eight months at a cost of Rs one million [rupees]. At the same time, students of the Film and Television Institute of India were also making their own studies into this matter as a part of their course.

He said Doordarshan's own coverage would increase vastly with the launch in 1995 of INSAT-2B, which would be devoted totally to telecommunications and information including radio and television.

He said there were reports that there would be 118 foreign networks beaming into India very soon and so the Ministry had written to the owners of the foreign channels and also to Indian missions abroad to apprise them of the country's point of view.

Talking on the expansion of Doordarshan, he said the Metro channel was being received terrestrially in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Hyderabad and Lucknow. In the second phase, this will be received terrestrially in all State capitals and two mega cities, and all other cities in the third phase.

Mr Singh Deo announced that the Supreme Court had vacated the stay imposed by Delhi High Court on the scheme for private producer participation in the satellite channels. However, the apex court had ruled that any scheme drawn up by Doordarshan will have to be shown to it.

He said the Government would draw up an appropriate scheme for participation of private producers since Doordarshan alone could not produce the programmes to fill the 14,400 hours of telecast time available per year.

#### **Inability To Host SAARC Summit Before Polls Told**

94AS0284B Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English  
27 Apr 94 p 6

[Text] India has informed the member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] of its inability to host the eighth SAARC summit in November. Instead, Delhi has offered to host the summit in April 1995, senior External Affairs Ministry sources told THE STATESMAN over the phone.

The Prime Minister's preoccupation with elections in several States—which are scheduled between November and March—was cited as the cause for the postponement.

The SAARC charter stipulates that heads of States and Governments of the member States meet once a year.

The postponement of the eighth SAARC summit will upset the summit cycle. Officials point out that the ninth summit cannot be organized in the winter of 1995, as there is no provision for two meetings in one year.

However, India intends to get the decision ratified in the July meeting of the SAARC Foreign Ministers in Dhaka.

#### **Economic Panel Analyzes 3d Year of Plan**

94AS0284H Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA  
in English 22 Apr 94 p 18

[Text] New Delhi, April 21 (PTI)—The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has forecast double-digit inflation to bedevil the economy in the current year, despite the government's recent assertion to the contrary.

In a macro analysis of the economy for 1994-95, the third year of the eighth plan, the council said the year should see "significant improvement" in economic growth, though inflation is expected to climb.

It said the level of average prices of different sectors (an index similar to wholesale price index) is projected to rise by 10.2 per cent for the year as a whole in 1994-95 over 1993-94 average. The impact of various administered prices is incorporated into this estimate, the council said barring further significant increases in procurement prices of grains.

The council said the rise in the price of manufactured items is higher than agricultural prices—a phenomenon noted in 1993-94 as well—is due to enhanced industrial activity, higher capacity utilisation and hence higher mark-ups.

Presenting two sets of GDP (gross domestic product) growth for the current year, the council said the GDP at factor cost in constant prices is estimated to rise by 4.8 per cent in 1994-95 over the last year. The GDP growth at this level will equal the growth rate scored in 1990-91.

In the alternative scenario with lower agricultural output and higher agricultural prices, the real growth drops to 4 per cent, giving a lower end of expectations for 1994-95.

The council contended that despite the problems of inflation which would call for "careful management," the economy seems to be set for recovery.

Referring to the reasons for its optimistic outlook on the recovery of the economy, the Council said, for the first time, both industrial growth and real GDP growth are mainly dependent on the growth in private investment expenditures.

Stating that in the past the major factor was the public investment, it said in 1994-95 public investment expenditures are expected to grow by 8 per cent, while private investment expenditures will grow by 31 per cent.

This sound growth in private investment expenditure, the council said, is due to the high business expectations for

the next six months, substantial reduction in direct taxes and considerably enhanced inflows of investment from abroad along with improvement in mobilisation of funds from the domestic market.

It said the external factors for the economy seem 'promising' as the economies in North America and western Europe were reported to be on the path of recovery from the downswing of the business cycle of the recent years.

The two macro models prepared by NCAER are contingent on the assumption that the monsoon is below 'normal' like last year or in which it is much worse than last year. Significantly, the growth of agricultural production in both the scenarios is not very different at 2.6 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively, the council said.

The models showed that the overall industrial output, including construction but excluding mining and quarrying, is projected to rise by 6.8 per cent and a major part of the increase is to come from the capital goods sector which is likely to get a reprieve from its recession through a recovery in private investment activity.

The council said the cuts in corporate income-tax, extension of MODVAT (modified value-added tax) to capital goods provided in this year's Union budget are likely to spur investment activity and hence the capital goods sector.

#### **Firms Agree To Explore Indian, Russian Oil**

94AS0284C Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA  
in English 28 Apr 94 p 19

[Text] Bombay, April 27—Interlink Petroleum Ltd (IPL) has joined hands with Russneft, Russian oil company, to conduct oil exploration projects in India and Russia.

As per the agreement, Rossneft will participate in Interlink Petroleum's public issue when it enters the capital market in May. It will also provide technology and equipment in oil exploration to its Indian partner and provisions for allocation of prospective oilfields in Russia in consortium with other companies.

#### **CPI-ML Factions for Leftist Unity**

94AS0284F Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English  
23 Apr 94 p 4

[Text] In spite of its differences with the Left Front Government in West Bengal, the CPI(ML) [Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist], Liberation favours a broad unity of the Left forces at the national level, to dislodge the Congress(I) Government at the Centre. This was stated by Mr Vinode Misra, general secretary of the party, in Calcutta on Friday. He addressed a rally at Sahid Minar to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the CPI(ML).

A procession was organized during the day from Deshbandhu park to Esplanade, with peasants from Bihar and West Bengal.

Criticizing the "parliamentary, social democratic and opportunist CPI [Communist Party of India] and CPI(M)

[Communist Party of India-Marxist]," Mr Misra said they were interested more in keeping the Left Front Government in power in West Bengal than in building up a genuine Left movement against the Centre.

He, however, added that the Liberation would oppose any move by the Congress(I) and the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to dislodge the Front Government in West Bengal.

Mr Misra ruled out the possibility of inviting the CPI and the CPI(M) to the convention of the Left organizations in New Delhi on April 25 and 26, to draw a common programme of action to oppose the Dunkel proposals.

He claimed the Liberation had revised its policies in accordance with the changing situation and was in a position to provide leadership to the Left movement in the country.

"We are the only true Naxalite group in the country," Mr Misra asserted.

Commenting on the recent clashes between the Liberation and the MCC [Maoist Communist Center (Bihar Extremist Group)] activists in Bihar, he said the former was prepared for talks with the MCC "unconditionally," to end the violence.

#### **CPI-M, BJP Leaders Cite Opposition to GATT**

94AS0284E Calcutta THE SUNDAY STATESMAN  
in English 24 Apr 94 p 5

[Text] Thiruvananthapuram, April 23—The CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] leader, Mr E.M.S. Namboodiripad, said today that the opposition to India's signing of the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] was likely to develop into a major political crisis for the Narasimha Rao Government, which is in a minority in the Rajya Sabha, report PTI and UNI.

The GATT would cause amendments to several existing laws in India, and with the Congress(I) in a minority in Rajya Sabha there was no guarantee that the ruling party would emerge a victor in its legislative efforts in the Upper House, Mr Namboodiripad said.

He was inaugurating a series of seminars, programmed by the Thiruvananthapuram Press Club. The opening seminar was on "GATT and Kerala."

Mr Namboodiripad said apart from the fact that all the non-Congress(I) Opposition parties were against India signing the GATT, even within the Congress(I), leaders like Mr Arjun Singh were of the view that the Congress(I) should have attempted to evolve a consensus on the question of signing of the GATT.

By signing the GATT which jeopardized the country's economic sovereignty, the Narasimha Rao Government had in one stroke jettisoned the positive aspects of the Nehruvian policies being pursued by the country, Mr Namboodiripad said.

The signing of GATT had aggravated the negative aspects of these policies which the Communist Party had been opposing since the second Five-Year Plan, he said.



The foreign investment in India was now more in the share market than in setting up new industries, he pointed out. Mr Namboodiripad added that even industrialists had expressed apprehension about the policies pursued by the Narasimha Rao Government.

He said the Left parties had planned to launch in August a civil disobedience movement in which some 10 lakh people were expected to participate.

The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] is chalking out a programme of action to mobilize public opinion against the GATT, the party spokesman, Mr K.L. Sharma, said here today.

He said the BJP plans to have *Jan Adalats*, where the GATT issue would be taken up and its implications to the Nation's economic sovereignty would be publicized.

The party workers would also court arrest, Mr Sharma told reporters. He said the programme to oppose the GATT outside Parliament would be drawn up by a three-member committee set up by the party.

Mr Sharma reiterated the party's demand that the Government should hold a referendum on the issue instead of merely taking it up for discussion in Parliament.

He said the GATT was one issue on which all the Opposition parties had a similar stand, but felt that the initiative for joint action should come from other political parties as well.

#### **New Left Party To Contest in Serampore By-Election**

94AS0284D Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English  
25 Apr 94 p 3

[Text] Mr Manoranjan Hazra, former CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] and a prominent leader of the newly formed Proletarian Revolutionary Party of India [PRPI], will contest the forthcoming Assembly by-polls at Serampore in Hooghly district on a PRPI ticket, the party general secretary, Mr Sumanta Hira, said on Sunday.

The PRPI candidate will be supported by a 10-party combine including the SUCI [Socialist Unity Center of India] and the CPI(M-L) [Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist], Mr Hira said.

Mr Hazra has already begun a door-to-door campaign to garner votes for himself. Being new, his party, not surprisingly, has a limited following in Serampore.

The Congress(I), Mr Hazra said, had won the past three Assembly polls in the constituency on the strength of the "negative votes," cast against the CPI(M).

The PRPI leadership is reportedly of the view that Mr Hazra will cut into the votes of both the Congress(I) and the CPI(M).

Mr Hazra would get the Congress(I) votes because of his association with the freedom movement, Mr Hira said.

Traditional CPI(M) voters, he added, would also support Mr Hazra as he had initiated several development projects in Serampore.

#### **Moves, Status of Election Commissioner Reported**

##### **Constitution Amendment Planned**

94AS0283A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English  
26 Apr 94 p 1

[Article by Subrata Sen: "Amendment Likely To Clip Seshan's Powers"]

[Text] New Delhi, April 25—In a move apparently aimed at clipping the wings of the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr T.N. Seshan, the Government has decided to bring a Constitution amendment Bill during the current session of Parliament. The Bill is intended to make the functioning of the multi-member Election Commission well-defined and effective.

The draft of the proposed Constitution amendment Bill has already been finalized by the Union Law Ministry and is expected to be circulated to leaders of all political parties soon. Besides amending the Constitution, the Union Government is also contemplating changing the Representation of People's Act [RPA], 1950, regarding the definition of the term, "ordinarily resident," which makes it mandatory for a Rajya Sabha member to belong to a State from where he is elected.

The proposed Constitution amendment regarding the functioning of the Election Commission consists of three points:

- Equate other Election Commissioners with the Chief Election Commissioner in the matter of their removal from office
- Provide for the conduct of the business of the Election Commission
- Provide for a prohibition as to the holding of office by members of the commission after ceasing to be such members.

By these amendments, the Union Government wanted to equate the other Election Commissioners with the Chief Election Commissioner by making their appointments to last a full term, unless nullified by an impeachment motion in Parliament.

The business of the Election Commission would provide clear-cut guidelines regarding the functioning of the Election Commissioners, who, after the amendment, could act as a check and balance against any unilateral decision taken by the CEC [Chief Election Commissioner].

The amendment to the RPA, regarding the redefining of "ordinarily resident" status for the Rajya Sabha members was necessitated as several members of the ruling party, including some Ministers, were facing inquiries by the Election Commission on the basis of this clause in the RPA.

That the Government has taken a decision on a Constitution amendment Bill regarding the functioning of the

Election Commission was indicated today to some leaders of the Opposition parties, although informally, by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr V.C. Shukla, during an informal luncheon meeting convened by the Lok Sabha Speaker, Mr Shivraj Patil.

The Opposition members, specially those from the Left, objected to the Government's decision to redefine the ordinary resident status by changing the RPA. They, however, agreed to the proposed Constitution amendment Bill on the functioning of the EC, provided the Government also went in for one or more Bills to have a comprehensive electoral reform.

Sources said that the Opposition parties did not want that a signal be sent that Parliament was eager to clip the wings of Mr Seshan by bringing in a Constitution amendment.

The Opposition parties were also of the opinion that while a Bill pertaining to electoral reforms was welcome during the current session of Parliament, the process should involve all the major political parties in the country.

### Supreme Court Order

94AS0283B Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English  
26 Apr 94 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, April 25—The Supreme Court today clarified that the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr T.N. Seshan, could take action for alleged breach of the code of conduct after the issuance of the by-election notification...

A Division Bench comprising Mr Justice J.S. Verma and Mr Justice S.P. Bharucha, said:

- The court made it clear that its interim order of April 4, 1994, was made and intended to operate only till the time of issuance of the statutory notification.
- As such notification was expected shortly, the CEC had sought modification of the April 4 order.
- From the submission of the CEC, it seems that it was merely for the clarification of the said order.
- The only dispute raised by the writ petition of the Andhra Government was regarding the enforceability of the Model Code of Conduct prior to the issue of the poll notification under the RPA which commenced with the election process.
- The petition also pertained to the question whether the code had legal sanction in case of a breach, of the code prior to the issue of the statutory notification calling for the by-elections 31 days from the actual poll date.
- The petition by the Andhra Pradesh Government did not raise the dispute regarding the desirability and enforceability of the model code from the time of issuance of the poll notification.

That order had come on a petition by the Andhra Pradesh Government seeking a restraint on the CEC from stopping the State from going ahead with certain schemes in the Kurnool Lok Sabha seat, where by-elections are due next month, with effect from the date of announcement of the poll instead of the notification date.

### Limit on Powers

94AS0283C Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English  
29 Apr 94 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, April 28—Mrs Margaret Alva, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, today said in the Rajya Sabha that till a court ruling was available, the Government would abide by the opinion expressed by the former Attorney General that the Centre and State Governments, not the Election Commission, were empowered to take action against officers indicted by the Election Commission on various grounds.

Mrs Alva said this while informing the House during Question Hour that the Election Commission had moved the Supreme Court, seeking a ruling on its authority to take disciplinary action against the officials.

(UNI adds from Pune: The Chief Election Commissioner, Mr T.N. Seshan, today warned that the Election Commission would strictly abide by the ceiling on election expenditure and any candidate or political party found exceeding the limit would be dealt with firmly. However, he conceded that the ceiling of Rs 1.5 lakh [rupees] was low and needed to be raised or abolished.

He also warned that action under the Indian Penal Code would be initiated against political parties found spending on behalf of a candidate without his consent.)

Earlier, a section of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha accused the Centre of protecting officials indicted by the Election Commission for tardy functioning while on poll-related duty.

The Election Commission had indicted 28 officials, Mrs Alva said, and, as per the procedures specified in the service conduct rules, the concerned Ministries were making preliminary inquiries to ascertain if regular departmental action was required against them.

The House was told that after preliminary inquiries, charges had been dropped against five officials, two had retired, departmental inquiries were being conducted against two, and action had been taken against one.

### Announcement on Poll Process

94AS0283D Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*  
in English 29 Apr 94 p 1

[Text] Pune, April 28—The chief election commissioner, Mr T.N. Seshan, said today he will strictly enforce the Rs 1.5-lakh ceiling on election expenses of a candidate and threatened political parties and their candidates with invoking Indian Penal Code [IPC] if they attempted to circumvent the ceiling, reports PTI.

Mr Seshan told representatives of political parties here that the IPC section 171(H) prohibited expenses of more than Rs 10 by "anybody," a term, he said, which included political parties too, on behalf of the candidate without the candidate's consent.

"And if the candidate gives his consent for such expenses, those expenses would be included in his election expenses for which the ceiling under the Representation of People's

Act (RPA) section 77 is Rs 1.5 lakh," he said, warning that exceeding the ceiling would mean violation of the RPA.

Mr Seshan described the Rs 1.5 lakh ceiling as a "joke, which needs either to be increased or abolished," but nevertheless he asserted its strict implementation since the provision was enacted by Parliament.

He is on a three-day visit to supervise poll preparations in the Ahmednagar and Baramati Lok Sabha constituencies.

Mr Seshan, in response to a suggestion by a political leader, said a decision on the proposal to provide polling slips to voters either by the government or by the election commission itself would be taken by May 2.

He said there was no ban on candidates going to religious places but "direct or indirect political propaganda" inside such places of worship was liable for penal action.

Mr Seshan welcomed a suggestion to appoint an observer during elections to monitor use of religion for political gain.

The entire election process will be video-taped which would make it easy to detect violation of model code of conduct for elections by political parties and candidates.

He directed the district election machinery to widely advertise through newspapers for knowledge of voters that all ballots would be mixed together before counting as a step to protect the identity of voters and prevent post-election intimidation.

The election commission would send 600 central police personnel to assist the local administration during the polling.

Among those who attended the meeting were the Congress leaders, Bapusaheb Thite, who would be the party's candidate for the Baramati by-election, a Congress MP [member of Parliament], Mr Vidura Navale, the district Congress president, Mr Krishnarao Bhegade, the Janata Dal leader, Mr Shambhaji Rao Kakade, among others.

Mr Seshan also denied reports that he allegedly "snubbed" the Congress MP from Kopergaon, Mr Shankar. ao Kale, at the meeting with representatives of political parties at Ahmednagar yesterday.

"I did not know that he is a MP," Mr Seshan told political leaders who met him here while denying that he humiliated Mr Kale whom he described as a senior parliamentarian.

"Join a political party and I will talk to you," is how Mr Seshan dismissed a journalist who wanted to elicit more information on the election process.

"I have lost confidence in the press," he told journalists.

Mr Seshan went on to cite his personal medical reports saying he would speak to journalists on any topic other than those under his official purview. "Press of India is a good means (to achieve ends). But today I do not use it as a means and want no benefit from it," he added.

**Border Forces Said To Fire on Unarmed Civilians**  
94AS0284G Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English  
23 Apr 94 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, April 22—In a significant development, the NHRC [National Human Rights Commission] has held the Border Security Force [BSF] personnel responsible for firing live ammunition at an unarmed crowd at Bijbehara in Kashmir on October 22. The firing had killed 37 and injured 73.

In its report, the NHRC recommended immediate proceedings for the prosecution of the 14 "guilty" officials identified by the Magisterial Inquiry.

The NHRC asked the Centre to undertake a thorough review of the circumstances and conditions in which BSF units were deployed to operate in situations involving solely civilian populations.

Also, it sought payment of Rs 50,000 [rupees], as compensation, to the next of kin of those killed; Rs 25,000 to those injured by bullets and Rs 10,000 to those who sustained other injuries.

The report was accepted by the Centre and an "action-taken report" tabled simultaneously.

The commission's report said that the evidence collected in the inquiry under the BSF Act, shows, *prima facie*, that a sizeable group of local residents had gathered after prayers at the Jama Masjid and had later moved to the national highway. There they were accosted by a BSF unit.

"The evidence provided to the Staff Court of Inquiry by those in the procession," the report pointed out, "states that there were no armed militants in the crowd, the members of which were shouting political slogans and slogans against the siege of the Hazratbal shrine by the Defence forces."

The NHRC report added that with the exception of one witness—from the six whose evidence was recorded—none of the others referred to any altercations between the people in the crowd and the BSF personnel. In fact, the witnesses stated that the people in the crowd were unarmed and that the firing by the BSF on the crowd was "without warning."

The NHRC noted that although the situation in the Valley called for firm measures, the firing of live ammunition into a crowd of unarmed civilians could not be condoned.

The commission told the Centre to keep it informed of the action—taken on its recommendations—and also of any measures being contemplated against those identified in the Magisterial Inquiry and Staff Court of Inquiry.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, which released the "action-taken" report, stated that Record of Evidence proceedings had already been initiated against 14 BSF personnel.

It said that the BSF authorities had been instructed to complete the proceedings expeditiously. Investigations into a case, registered in the local police station, had reportedly been completed and steps had been initiated to file a chargesheet against the indicted personnel.



The Ministry claimed that the following steps had been undertaken by the BSF to ensure proper safety of civilians:

- The training syllabus emphasized respect for human rights and ways to deal with the public, particularly with the elderly, women and children.
- Wherever searches were conducted, the services of the Magistrate, Civil Police and women police were requisitioned.

#### **Flight Data Processing System Developed**

94AS0284J Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA  
in English 29 Apr 94 p 9

[Text] Bangalore, April 28—The Bangalore-based National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) has designed and developed an Integrated Flight Data Processing (IFDP) system at a cost of Rs. 40 lakhs [rupees] for all types of Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR), commonly known as Black Box in aviation parlance, and Quick Access Recorder (QAR) used by Air India.

According to Dr K.N. Raju, NAL director, the system, developed in a record time of nine months, is based on Tata Unisys U600/60 mini computer. It could be used to acquire data from four known sources of DFDRs and QARs simultaneously to speed up data acquisition.

The system is also capable of processing the raw data, acquiring data from a specific GMT, data transcription, conversion of engineering units and display of selected parameters. It could also check on various parameter limit "exceedencies" during a selected flight.

Dr Raju said the system developed at Air India's behest could also reply and analyse flight data recorded either on DFDR or on performance monitoring recorders (PMRs) to provide vital clues during investigation of accidents or incidents. It would now be available to other air taxi operators in the country following a Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) directive that it would be mandatory for these operators to have data from DFRs for at least three months.

Stating that most of the private operators were not even maintaining the Black Box properly, Dr Raju said an additional feature of the system was that it contained a special event search monitoring and analysis software.

The software sets up a database of all the detected events, allowing them to be interrogated by time period and aircraft registration with the output used to assess which operating techniques or other characteristics were causing erosion of safety margins. The routine information generated by this analysis was complementary to the assessments by pilots and would enhance air safety. The IFDP had provision to achieve the processed data on a mass storage media for potential applications such as engine health monitoring flight operation analysis and fuel efficiency monitoring.

According to Dr Raju, the IFDP had a good export potential as it would cost 50 to 60 per cent less than the available data readers abroad. Further, it would also help the aircraft operators to get readouts of the black box

within the country, as at present they had to seek sources from abroad for such readouts.

According to Dr S. Nagabhushana, head of the Aerospace Lab of NAL, the laboratories had over the past five years developed expertise in the readout and analysis of both the Black Boxes—the DFDRs and the Cockpit Voice Recorders (CVRs) of aircraft including Boeing 737 and 747, Airbus A300, A310 and A320. The system for the Sundstrand Universal Flight data recorder (UFDRs) used by the 737 Boeings with air taxi services which would be available in a month's time.

Dr Nagabhushana said though DFDRs generally conform to the Aeronautical Radio Incorporated (ARINC) 573 standards, each aircraft was fitted with DFDRs of different makes, necessitating tailor-made systems both in terms of hardware and software.

NAL had specialised in addressing these problems and had acquired indigenous capability to develop sophisticated readout systems.

The related future plans before NAL included four dimensional flight path reconstruction, analysis of damaged tapes (accident investigation), realtime satellite data links using Inmarsat and development of solid state DFDRs used in Boeing 747—400s.

The IFDP would be handed over to Air India here on May 4.

## **IRAN**

#### **March-April Narcotics Seizures Detailed**

94LA0165B Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL  
in English 27 Apr 94 p 7

[Text] Tehran, April 26 (IRNA)—A total 8,296 kgs of narcotics were seized during the last Iranian month (March 21-April 21), registering an increase of 25.83 percent compared with the same period last year.

A report by the Anti-Drug Campaign Hq. at the Presidential Bureau here Monday, said that the haul included 7,327 kgs of opium, 674 kgs of hashish, 243 kgs of morphine, 49.5 kgs of heroine, and 2.5 kgs of other drugs.

It said 2,134 drug traffickers were arrested in the same period, adding that 63.6 percent of the narcotics were seized in Sistan-Baluchestan, 10.6 percent in Kerman and 8.5 percent in Khorasan provinces.

#### **Pakistani Corps Opposed to Iranian Pipeline**

94LA0168D Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian  
11 May 94 p 2

[Text] Tehran, 15 Ordibehesht [5 May] KEYHAN News Service—Hafez Ahmad Bakhsh, general secretary of the Pakistan Corps of the Companions, threatened that if the project to lay the Iranian gas pipeline across Pakistan to India is carried out, this corps' agents will vigorously fight it.

He gave a press conference in Pakistan's Sind Province in which he accused Iran of interfering in Pakistan's domestic

affairs. He said: Ever since Pakistan's new government first came to power, Iran has continuously interfered in our country's domestic affairs.

The general secretary of the Corps of the Companions, which receives financial and political support from Saudi Arabia, said that the existence of Iran's cultural houses in Pakistan's cities is a danger to Pakistan's security. He said: The Corps of the Companions has expressed concern about the existence of Iran's cultural houses in eight of Pakistan's cities and it demands that the constant entry of Iranian delegations into Pakistan be stopped.

He expressed sharp opposition to the project to lay Iran's gas pipeline across Pakistan to India, calling it interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs. He warned that the Corps of the Companions will not permit one inch of this pipeline to cross Pakistani soil.

Hafez Ahmad protested the move by the Islamabad government to expel Arab terrorists residing in Pakistan. He called them Arab mujahedin and said: The current government of Pakistan has called the Arab mujahedin living in Pakistan terrorists and has ordered their expulsion, yet they fought to protect Pakistan's territorial integrity. The Islamabad government has recently arrested several Arabs living in Pakistan for the crime of creating fear and terror and for engaging in terrorist acts, and intends to expel them from Pakistan.

The general secretary of the Corps of the Companions warned the Islamabad government not to expel the Arab terrorists and said: If the Arab mujahedin are treated in an inappropriate and unethical way, the Corps of the Companions will vigorously fight this action.

The Corps of the Companions is one of the Pakistani groups that have caused many factional and religious clashes in this country. This corps, which is maintained by Saudi Arabia, is openly hostile to the Shiites of Pakistan, and one of its permanent programs is to mount armed attacks against Shiite religious and ideological gatherings and to kill and maim innocent people.

### Construction of 80 Dams Begins Nationwide

94LA0166D Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian  
20 Apr 94 p 10

[Text] Kerman, 23 Farvardin [12 April] KEYHAN News Service—Speaking to a group of students in the municipality of Sirjan, the executive vice-president of the republic said: With the completed construction of 80 dams by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, 70 percent of the nation's surface water will be captured.

Hamid Mirzadeh, executive vice-president of the republic, also discussed the government's economic, social, development, and policymaking plans. He said: During the First Five-Year Plan, the government was able to take effective steps along with the nation to create suitable conditions for more investments throughout the country, and in this regard it has so far made great changes in the industrial sector. He added: Construction is under way right now on 80 water-earth dams, and when these projects go into full operation 70 percent of the nation's water will be anchored.

He said the annual water existing in the country is 120 billion cubic meters [ $m^3$ ]. He said: Despite all the efforts that have been made, only 20 billion  $m^3$  of water is anchored annually.

Mirzadeh noted that in the last few years major changes have been made in the industrial sector. He said: Steel production, which has not even reached 1 million tons per year in the last few years, is now four times greater annually.

He also discussed literacy training. He said: Fortunately, with the attention that has been given to this matter, illiteracy has decreased from 50 percent to less than 20 percent.

Continuing his remarks, the executive vice-president of the republic said: The government is trying, through increased investments, to improve the nation's economy. In this regard, since the beginning of the current year [21 March 1994], several large projects have gone into operation, including the Sarijan Gol Gahar Iron Ore Complex.

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